

LOVE

The Norse-Anglo-Saxon history of SEX



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LOVE

The Norse-Anglo-Saxon history of SEX

a story in three parts

by knyaz Rikard

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## Foreword

### THOUGHTS WHEN I WROTE THIS BOOK

This book is a quest of the origin of the English language. It is impossible to understand the development of the English language nor the Anglo-Saxon culture without including sex. Sex and curiosity are the two main drives that developed mankind.

The time-setting is the Bronze Age, when, in Northern Europe, the temperature was about 2-4 degrees warmer per day than today.

The book begins with a description of the fertility culture that was the basis for the horticulture and had women in leading positions and used the “walking marriages” that means a totally different view on relationships. In these matriarchial cultures there were practically no rapes, no crime and they had a natural increase of the population of 1 %. That is, they did not overuse the natural resources, but had an increasing wealth each year. This is the way mankind has lived for 95% of its existence.

The book also reflects the intermingling of the Irish-Anglo-Saxon-Norse culture that formed the Anglo-Saxon culture and language.

This book gives my views of the split between the fertility/ fruitfulness culture, and the other war-aggressive cultures, that happened. It blends the development of the Irish, Celtic, Welsh, Gaelic and Basque heritage.

The war between the fruitfulness culture and the war-aggressive culture reflects a change in the production process, from horticulture wanting a hack-axe to agriculture using an ard and later a plough. During the Stone Age and Bronze Age, women brought in 70% of the food.

New innovations were the plough, which meant more food, the mould, to make weapons, and stirrups, to be able to attack from a horseback position. These innovations changed the power balance between men and women. Men became dominant and supplied up to 90 % of the food.

This book is also a search for lost words. Sometimes it was very hard to find old words, *teem* and *twain* for example, but I found them in Shakespeare.

The words we use also mirror the development of the mind, from thinking with our brain-stem to using the brain-bark. The older we become the more we think with our brain-bark, leaving the brain stem. We become more and more boring, but logical.

The stem holds feelings, new thinking, love, our grounded needs, whilst the brain-bark takes care of counting, logical thoughts, structure, discipline and so on. I have wanted the old words as often as possible to get the right feeling and to evoke the feelings that these people might have had.

Remember that Latin is a new language dating from around 250 BC. We have found many words with links to the Indo-European language base. Some of the Latin words that we use today have Scandinavian or Proto-Germanic roots, for example French *equipper* from Norse *skip*.

The book ends with the return to the land of Fruitfulness that gives a view of a possible future a new tomorrowland that is much more adapted to the IT-time we live and will live in.

## **Wordlist**

Old words making a comeback

Awe -- worship

Ansyn -- face

Ard -- wooden plough

Behest -- order

Cun -- know

Din -- sound

Eke -- increase

Forbedd -- Litter, stretcher

Frik -- dance

Frith -- peace

Fullway walk -- To walk in a holy procession

Galdr -- Spell

Gong -- tunnel

Ham -- Enter an animal's soul (hug) A place where this took place.

Harg -- Heargh or Horgh, harrow, holy place

Headway -- direction

Hug -- soul

Ingong -- entrance

Loath -- inclined

Lufu -- make love.

Lund -- holy place in an open area.

May -- as a verb; to bind flowers around the May-pole.

Megi -- magic power

Mun -- remember

Outgong -- exit

Pinung -- Punishment

Reethe -- voice

Settra-girl -- girl who helped the bride with their clothes or teeming.

Sidr -- Old bylaw

Smyltness -- silence

Stallar -- A holy stone in the middle of a shrine. A Stede.

Stillness -- silence.

Twain -- a loving couple.

Teem -- conceive at the right time.

Tun -- Town.

We -- "We" is a Weoh or Wy or Vi - a holy place, a shrine.

Wig-bed -- A stone where the Twain made love and were wed.

Wont -- use

## **Links to historical events, archeological or written sources:**

### **-Foreword.**

### **-Chapter 1 The land of frutifullness.**

This is a description of matriarchial culture that believed in “trust” and no jealousy, that had no rapes, no crime, a constant growth, a staggering wealth.

### **-Chapter 2. The first folk fight:**

The paradigm-change from horticulture to agriculture. The fight is told in Völuspa, in the Poetic Edda by Snorre Sturlasson. The poetic Völuspa describes the swap of cultures. The change is due to the moulding of swords and to the invention of stirrups and the plated plough. From this time comes the big change in mentality. The male power takes over.

### **-Chapter 3 Love becomes a Vigdyda:**

According to Margret Rehnberg, UCLA: Women brought in 70% of the food during the Bronze Age. During horticulture the women brought in more food than the men and therefore there were more women priests (Gydyas) than men priests (Gothis).

### **-Chapter 4 Geirwald In Hallstatt**

The basic idea is to describe how the plough gave more and more harvest and how the ard could feed more and more men. It became crowded. Geirwald is a token of the many men that had to leave to make a living in other places. The spear is the token of Odin, of the Aesirs. This is why Geirwald wins the spear-throwing match. On many hobs with stone-carvings you see the old Vana carvings over-carved with long spears.

### **-Chapter 5 Love in Herrebro.**

Description of the old song Völsetåten. Völse was a horse dick groomed with linen and onion, laukar, to be used as a dildo. Perhaps the world’s first dildo with a name. We find the Völsetåten-song in the Flateyer book from Iceland in around the year 1300. It was sung when the Völse was passed around the table and all at the table sang a quoth.

### **-Chapter 6 Love sets out to Newgrange, Ireland**

Herrebro is a place in Sweden, about 250 km south of Stockholm, where, in 1987, we forced a planned highway to be moved 500 meters to save the area’s stone carvings. This chapter also tells of a wedding performed according to anthropologic thinking and the old juridical paragraph from “Sängledning”, “Leading to the Wig-bed”, written between 1200 and 1300 from the Swedish Västgöta-law, where the wed couple (Twain) is followed by all the wedding guests into the bedroom. As a final touch we have added the bylaw from the Trobriand Islands whereby the women pick their men at the Feast by throwing one of their legs on his shoulder.

### **-Chapter 7 Geirwald towards Straubingen.**



This is a historical description of widow-burning, as described by the writer Ibn Fadlan in 922. His writing is about the Rus and the burial of a Rus Chieftan when Ibn Fadlan visits the Bulgars and Khazars, a Viking tribe that is now the 13th Askenashi tribe.

#### **-Chapter 8 Love leaves Herrebro.**

This chapter tells about the food that people ate during the Bronze Age. This variety is what we need and should envy today, no fast food and no additives.

#### **-Chapter 9 Geirwald meets the Berserkers and the Wolfskinners.**

This chapter tells of the gangs from the south that began to travel around to loot, plunder and rape. There were too many men in the same place; somebody had to leave, causing this development. Look for Hallstatt and Urnenfelder cultures. In this chapter we also meet the cult-hanging where Odin offers himself to himself for nine days. According to author Folke Ström Hednagudar. this is a shamanistic doing aiming to reach another level of knowledge. Odin had engulfed the Lappish bylaws.

#### **-Chapter 10 Love visits Ullevi and Närke.**

The relationship between the mother earth goddess Njörd or Nerthus and the sun god Ull or Oll. They had a number of Cult-places named and these places were in well-defined length from each other (John Kraft 1999 Hednagudar och hövdingadömen) It was between these places that Fullway walks, i.e. holy processions, took place. These Fullway walks were done at special times during the year and were a way to keep track of time. See the fruitfulness year. There is also an explanation of how they made the stone-carvings and the holes in the hobs, which mirrored the positions of the stars (Pehr Hasselroth 1989). The Nerthus cult was biasedly described by Tacitus in the year 98.

#### **-Chapter 11 Love visits Ale Stones.**

Here we find a description of how these stones have been used as a clock to keep track of time, as attested by G. Henriksson, Nils Axel Mörner and many other scientists. Ale Stones has some of the same directions as Stonehenge, Woodhenge and other solar "clocks". Also the DNA-method of discovering kinship in well over 30 generations living next door to mounds, or barrows.

#### **-Chapter 12 Love visits Rodeskilde.**

This chapter tells of drinks in the Bronze Age. Ale, mead and the blend of honey, wheat, bog-myrtle and cowberries, that was found in the Egtved-grave in Denmark along with the birch-bark box that held it, which might have inspired the recipe of the Danish hard drink Gammeldansk. Sexy rope-skirts and other clothes were also found in this grave in 1921. We also give a list of musical instruments used in the Bronze Age. (Cajsa S. Lund from the Göteborgs Universitet Inst. Ark).

#### **-Chapter 13 Geirwald views Irminsul**

Description of the huge Rod Irminsul, the old cult totem-pole of the Saxons, described by the monk Rodulf of Fulda (AD 865) and also by Tacitus in Germania. Irminsul and the world tree Yggdrasil in Norse mythology have some common features.

#### **-Chapter 14 Love visits the north Frisian islands**

In this chapter we have written about Frisian bylaws and doings but also Frisian place-names and games.

#### **-Chapter 15 Love and Geirwald meet.**

The clash between two ways of viewing women's freedom and sexuality and a clash between two cultures. But, still, Love at first sight. Enthralment!

#### **-Chapter 16 Love takes part the teeming in Dowth.**

Description of the "fuccan" process, the fruitfulness plowing ritual that gave birth to one the world's most widespread words; Fuck. This chapter tells about the change from hack-axe agriculture to wooden plough, the use of the whisk or broom to spread the seed and the cunning women who became the *witches* or *cunts* because they knew too much. See explanation in the wordbook Old English Wordbook of Sex. The old Irish, Welsh, Gaelic, Celtic bylaws and culture is intertwined with old bylaws. The concept of "Tir na nog" the land of the Youth is enlightened. Celtic holydays.

#### **-Chapter 17 Love visits Stonehenge and Woodhenge.**

The building, the wont and the fullness of Woodhenge, We tell of how it might have been used, what kind of functions it may have had. Based on the findings from Mr. Alexander Keiller Mrs. OSG Crawford and Mrs. Maud Cunnington 1926. Links to Stonehenge and Durrington walls are also described.

#### **-Chapter 18 On how Geirwald came to the land of the Angles**

The lathering of the goddess Nerthus, as described by Tacitus in the year 98. With Tacitus' writings as a base we have rewound some 1000 years further back and given the Fullway walk and lathering a more woman-centred approach. The cleaning bylaw is described as it is was and is used today in India.

#### **-Chapter 19 Love, queen of love and earth.**

A Norse and Anglo-Saxon version of the Sumer epic text *Inanna*. Love takes "dreamham" and sees her becoming lover being lost to the Underworld, to Hel and Nifelhel, the Lover to be regained. We have put the Norse and Anglo-Saxon gods, goddesses, mystical beings and so on, into the Inanna text. It foretells of Love's destiny or doom.

#### **-Chapter 20 Ing's nightmare.**

Love's lover in the form of the fruitfulness god Ing. Ing gave her name to many places and lands around the Baltic and North sea. A prolonging of the *Inanna*, a Norse-Anglo-Saxon epic text.

#### **-Chapter 21 The comeback; Ing comes back from Hel**

Ing returns from Hell or Hel. Third part of the *Inanna*, Norse-Anglo-Saxon epic text.

#### **-Chapter 22 On how Love lived in Knowth and Dowth and saw the yulebirth**

This chapter tells of how the Vanirs chose their leader on the 21st of December, Yule-month, at Newgrange. This is the same way as the Lama in Tibet is chosen. There are many records in

Celtic culture about the date of Midwinter and we regard the Newgrange shrine as a birth shrine. To celebrate Yule or later Christmas is an old tradition dating back to the Stone and Bronze Ages.

**-Chapter 23 On how Love visited the Orkney Islands.**

Description of life and the cult on the Orkney Islands. The Orkney Islands have been inhabited for at least 8500 years. They are one of the best saved Neolithic sites telling us about the high level of organization and administration in this society.

**-Chapter 24 On how Geirwald came to Tanum.**

Description of the rich culture found in Tanum, 60 km north of the Swedish town Gothenburg. We tell about the acts of looting and plunder that took place from the non-guarded stone altars, the stallars. Tanum has the largest collection of stone carvings in Europe.

**-Chapter 25 On how Love visits Whitlycke in Tanum.**

Description of the most famous stone carving hob in Tanum showing a Twain being wed by a Gothi with a Wig-axe. The Whitlycke-wedding. [www.whitlyckemuseum.se](http://www.whitlyckemuseum.se)

**-Chapter 26 On how Love and Geirwald met again.**

This is a symbolic meeting of two cultures that blend and together craft the child of a new culture.

**-Chapter 27 On how Love returns to Roden.**

Description of the feeling of returning home and the coming of new life. The return to normal life in a fruitfulness culture. The foretelling of tomorrowland

## **GODDESSES AND GODS**

### **THE VANIRS**

**NJÄRD** Also called Nerthus in Latin.

The Earth goddess. Njård stands for growth in nature, the power of life. From Njård or Njard or Neard we have many place-names that begin with Near-, Ner-, Nar- or När-, for example Närlunda and Närtuna in Sweden and Narborough and Narford in England (perhaps Nearu).

Njård is also the origin of Lögardagen, the lathering –day that turned into Saturday (Sunnanday Eve). Lögum and Lögtved in Denmark. When power shifts Njård turns into Njord, the god of Sea, and gives the name to Norway.

**ULL** The Sun god.

Ull shines on the earth that is the goddess Njård and life blooms.

Ull teems Njård every Spring Eve, to have the offspring at the Midwinter Solstice 9 months later. The May-pole is the token of Ull and of ritual ploughing, that is the “Fuccan”, when Ull teems Njård.

Many place-names comes from Ull: Ulleråker and Ullevi in Sweden, Ullswater Ulleskelf (skjalf) and Ulley in England.

When power shifts due to the invention of stirrups, the sword and the ard, Ull loses his position to Wotan or Odin. Ull becomes the god of skis and the archery.

**EIR** The goddess of medicine and Healing.

Eir helps the sick and old. She knows how to cure illness with healing herbs.

Today there is Eira Hospital in Helsinki and the Eira-vallen is a football stadium in Örebro, Sweden.

**VÅR** or **VAUR** The goddess of wedding.

Her token is the ring. Waur or vaur is the promise between a man and a woman. After the power shift it will mean the warrant between a warrior and a war-lord. (Ru. varyag)

From her we have many place-names;

Vårgårda, Varberg, Vårberg, Warwick, Warrington.

**ING** The God of Fruitfulness.

Many place-names come from Ing: Ingermanland in Russia, Ingarö and Ingelsta in Sweden, Ingham, Ingatestone and Inglethorpe in England.

Also many names, for example Ingemar, Inga, Ingrid, Ingvar.

Ing also came to England and brought a fine wagon.

His token is the hard-on and the ring.

LOVN or LOFN The goddess of Love.

The word *love* comes from her. Many place-names come from her;

Lov- Löv- Lofs-. Lovön och lofs-lake in Sweden and Loweswater,

Luffield, Lovard in England. The woman hero in this book takes her name from this goddess.

SKADE The goddess of Winter.

Has given Scandinavia its name. Skade is the token for the shamanistic influence on the Norse and Anglo-Saxon cultures.

DISA Disa or the Diser are the beings that shield mankind.

In February (in the middle of Göje month) the Disatingstunglet was awed. This is the same feast as St. Valentines Day today.

Disenå, Diserud and Vanadislunden in Stockholm, Sweden,

Diseworth, Disley in England.

## **AESIR GODS**

### **WOTAN**

The war god from the European inland.

Appears due to the following innovations; the plough, to make more food, stirrups, to attack from a horseback position and metal-moulding to make swords and spears.

Wotan was influenced by Mercurius and became Odin in the Nordic version. He won the battle with sun-god Ull and took his place.

There are very few Wotan or Odin place-names.

Wednesday refers to Wotan, but Wednesday is likely to have older roots and could be linked to Wedding.

Wotan is a modern god.

### **MARS**

The Roman name for Tiwas

TIWAS The sky god. Tiwas becomes Tyr in Norse mythology.

The day Tuesday, Tisdag (Swe) or Tirsdag (Dan) is linked to Tiwas.

### **MERCURIUS**

The god of trade.

A Roman god that is, according to Tacitus, the chief god of the German tribes.

Mercurius is linked to mercredi, Wednesday in French.

## **IRISH GODDESSES AND GODS**

### **ANU**

The Mother Goddess. The Goddess of plenty.

The Fruitfulness Goddess, air, wealth.

Also called Danu or Dana. She is a token for water, wells, good harvest, The Goddess of magick, wisdom.

### **AVETA**

The Goddess of Birth and Midwifery. She cares for the newborn, the offspring, the new generation to come.

### **BEL**

The God of Sun also the God of fire, fruitfulness, crops, good harvest.

### **BOANN**

The Goddess of the river Boyne

### **EOSTRE**

The Goddess of Easter, the fruitfulness Goddess of the Spring Eve.

### **MAEVE**

A Goddess of fertility. A lewd Goddess. She supports sexual activity.

She runs faster than the fastest horse. Also known as queen Maeve.

### **FAND**

The Goddess of Sea. Both of the Otherworld and the Island of Man. Queen of the fairies. Her name may be translated to : A tear or pearl of beauty She is the most beautiful, the most fulsome, of all Goddesses.

### **TARA**

Mother Goddess, She protects the land, she shelters the weak.

Perhaps Tara is the latin Terra. The Hill of Tara where the Kings of Ireland come.

## **PERSONS IN THE BOOK**

### **VANIRS**

## LOVE

The main character in the book, a woman of 25 years.

Has the rank of Wigydya. A Wigydya had to answer for the history, bylaws and doing of the tribe.

## KARLA

Bride-settra or Settra-girl. Karla helps Love with clothing at the rituals. At the Fullway walks (holy processions), the settra-girl also kept track of the gifts that were exchanged between the Vanir tribes.

## MAREN

Big, strong archer. 6-6 feet tall. Maren shields Love and is a good rower.

## MILDGYTH

Gives birth to a baby at Yuletide at Newgrange and will awe the fields with awed seed.

## RODULF

Skipper from Roden. Much experience of long trips at sea.

## INGOLF

Funny, horny drinker from Estonia with good jokes and a happy smile.

## ROAR

An enthralling teller of sagas and stories.

## VISTEN

Silent, tall rower.

## THE HOFGYDYA LEUFSTA

The mother of Love. The Hofgydya Leufsta had been one of the highest ranks of the Vanirs.

## ALF

The father of Love. Alf comes from the tribe of the Alves. The Alves are one of the Vanir tribes.

## AEDELSTAN

The man who teems with Mildgyth at Newgrange.

## THE HOFGYDYA LOWESWATER

Loweswater is second in rank among the Vanirs. Loweswater holds her Hof at Woodhenge near Stonehenge.

## THE VIGYDJA SUMMERSET

Awes the fields with awed seed around Newgrange, Knowth, Dowth.

#### UNCLE HÖSKULD

The uncle of Love who has trained her knowledge of the stars, reckoning of time, sea-fares, bylaws and doings.

#### AESIRS

#### GEIRWALD

The main male character in the story, a man of 25 years from Hallstatt in the middle of Europe. Geirwald leaves Hallstatt due to overpopulation. Geirwald is attracted to adventure and the possibility of finding loot and making a career somewhere else.

#### CHIEF WALTER

Old, skillful war-lord who has led many rape and plunder Trips both in the south and in northern lands.

#### KELLNER

Scary man with many scars from sicknesses. War-loving warrior with bleeding and mattering boils which ooze when he laughs. Weighs 285lb.

#### KRIEGERDORFER

Tall, skinny, bony warrior with hollow, greedy eyes.

#### HRADBART

Dark, strong warrior with a good hand to throw spears.

#### KAISPER

Overseer who helps Chief Walter. Short with hairy legs and a funny smile.

#### CELT (IRISH, WELSH, GAELIC)

#### THE HOFGYDYA BRID

The highest ranked person among the Vanirs. The Hofgydya Brid steers all the Vanir lands and heads the bylaws and doings (holy processions or fullway walks) at Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth.

#### THE VIGYDYA AVETA

She is a midwife and Vigydydy. She cares for the birth of the offspring.

#### AEDAN



The Irish man who ploughs the holy field of Anu, the mother goddess.

#### THE HOFGOTHI DARAGH

Hofgothi at Knowth.

#### MAEVE

Bride-settra or Settra-girl. Maeve helps the Twains with fuccan at the rituals. At the Fullway walks (holy processions), the settra-girl also kept track of the gifts that were exchanged.

#### O'RIAN

Red-haired,tall, handsome, fullsome Irish man that falls in Love with Love.

### **RANKS (not in chronological order)**

#### HOFGYDYA

Highest rank among the Vanirs. When buildings were built they were called Hofs in some places.

#### VIGYDYA

Second rank among the Vanirs. Linked to “We”, “Weoh”, “Wy”, “Wi” or “Vi” as a holy place. Often a holy place in nature. Sometimes with stones walls. Sometimes with marked with Hopt (rods in the earth) and Bonds (cloth hanging between the Hopts)

#### HARGGYDYA

The third rank among the Vanirs. Linked to “Heargh”, “Harrow” or “Harrod” Often the shrine was placed in a good –looking place in nature. Sometimes the Harg was surrounded by stone walls up to 90cm high, one outer rectangular ring and one inner rectangular ring of stone. The outer ring had an entrance (ingong) on the side lower short side of the rectangle. In the middle was a holy stone, a Stallar.

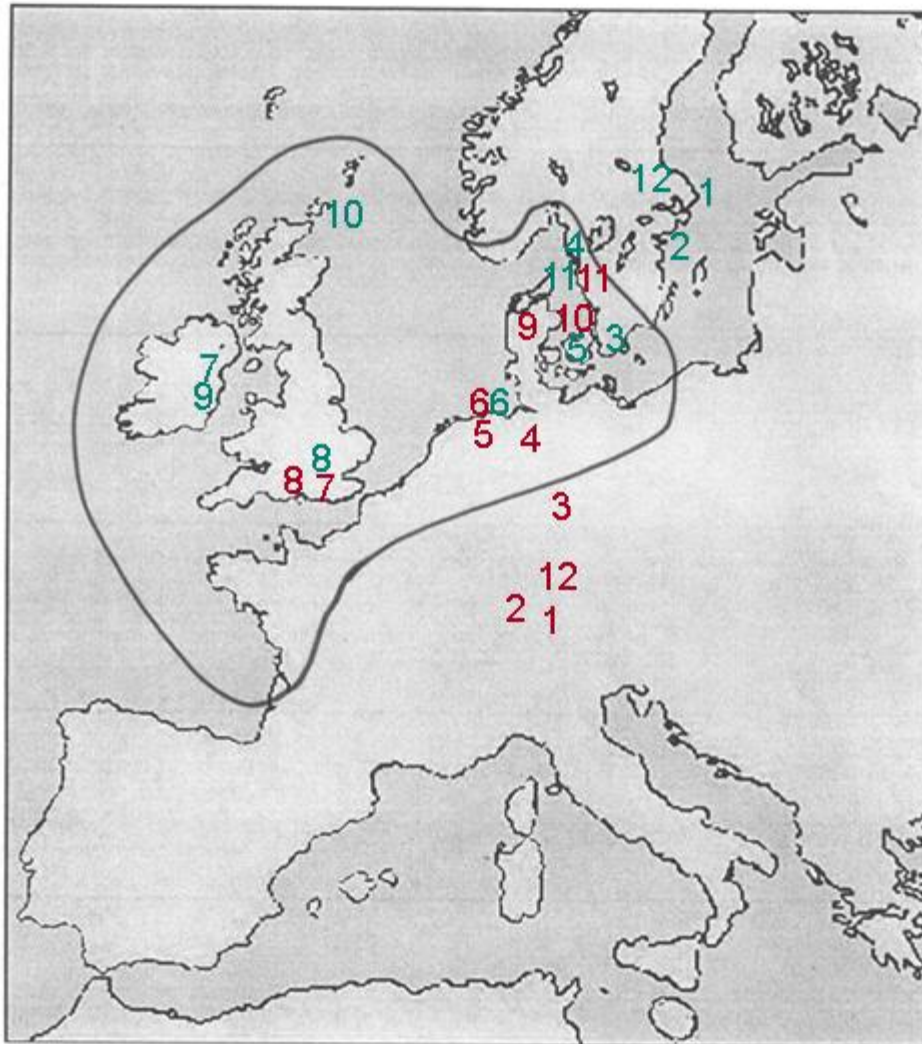
#### LUNDAGYDYA

The fourth rank among the Vanirs. Lund comes from the open grove. The open field or hill that serves as a shrine.

## MAP

### Love's trip

- 1.Roden 2.Herrebro 3.Ale Stenar 4.Ullevi and Näringe
- 5.Rodeskilde 6.North Frisian Islands 7.Knowth on Ireland
- 8.Stonehenge and Woodhenge 9.Newgrange on Ireland
- 10.Orkney Islands 11.Tanum north of Gothenburg 12.Roden



### Geirwald's trip

- 1.Hallstatt 2.Straubingen 3.Rhine 4.Weser
- 5.Frisian Coast line 6.North Frisian Islands 7.Anglia
- 8.Anguls bay 9.Sjælland in Denmark 10.Helsingör
- 11.Tanum 12.Towards Hallstatt

## **Foreword**

### **The SEX-history of Europe!**

Each chapter holds a historical sex-event. This is an alternative way to describe Europe's history thorough sex. Each chapter has a documented historical sex-hap as fundamental platform, interwoven with the plot of the main character a 25 year old women called "Love". Her thoughts and tellings describe the historical sex-event. It can be the story of the first dildo "Völse" made of stone and the mate "Mornir" also made of stone, found in the village Fosie in Southern Sweden, or the women group-rape of men on the fields from the Chateaubriand islands, that we regard, as a very common event in Europe during bronze-age, or the "fuccan"-ritual how the land was plough by a wooden plough and the in his hand spreading the seed, a blend of the best barley woman sap and semen.

#### **The roots of the world's most used words. The sex words!**

The book explains why and how the word "fuck" derived, why the word "cunt" is derogative, why a "witch" is a witch, why "cum" is come, why "cock" is a cock, why swingers "swing", why "rod" is the old totem-pole of the Norse-Anglo Saxon culture.

#### **The quest of the English language!**

This book is a quest of the origin of the English language. It is impossible to understand the development of the English language nor the Anglo-Saxon culture without including sex. Sex and curiosity are the two main drives that developed mankind. It is impossible to understand the roots of the English language without digging deep into sex and curiosity.

Remember that Latin is a new language dating from around 250 BC. We have found many words with links to the Indo-European language base. Some of the Latin words that we use today have e.g. Scandinavian or Proto-Germanic roots, for example French *equipper* from Norse *skip*.

#### **Matriarchal and avunculistic societies!**

The book begins with a description of the fertility culture that was the basis for the horticulture and had women in leading positions and used the "walking marriages" that means a totally different view on relationships. In these matriarchal cultures there were practically no rapes, no crime and they had a natural increase of the population of 1 %. That is, they did not overuse the natural resources, but had an increasing wealth each year. This is the way mankind has lived for 95% of its existence.

#### **The Irish- Norse-Anglo-Saxon-Norse culture blend!**

The book also reflects the intermingling of the Irish- Norse Anglo-Saxon culture that formed the Anglo-Saxon culture and the English language. It gives our views of the split between the fertility/ fruitfulness culture, and the other war-aggressive cultures, happened, blended the development of the Irish, Celtic, Welsh, Gaelic and Basque heritage.

#### **Change of production means!**

The war between the fruitfulness culture and the war-aggressive culture reflects a change in the production process, from horticulture wanting a hack-axe to agriculture using an ard (wooden plough) and later a metal clad plough. During the Stone Age and Bronze Age, women brought in 70% of the food. New innovations were the plough, which meant more food, the mould, to make metal weapons,

and the stirrups, to be able to attack from a horseback position. These innovations changed the power balance between men and women. Men became dominant and supplied up to 90 % of the food.

### **Brain-stem against brain-bark!**

The words we use also mirror the development of the mind, from thinking with our brain-stem to using the brain-bark. The older we become the more we think with our brain-bark, leaving the brain stem. We become more and more boring, but logical and organized.

The brain- stem holds feelings, new thinking, love, our grounded needs, whilst the brain-bark takes care of counting, logical thoughts, structure, discipline and so on. We have used the old words as often as possible to get the right feeling and to evoke the feelings that these people might have had.

### **Norse-Anglo-Saxon-Irish words against Latin words!**

The chapters regarding the fruitfulness culture are written with more Norse-Anglo-Saxon-Irish words and the chapter containing the war-cultures are written with more Latin words.

### **The time to come and what to do!**

The book ends with the heroine Love's return to the land of fruitfulness that gives a view of a possible future, a new tomorrowland that is much more adapted to the IT-time we live in today and will live in.

Today's IT-world has another way of thinking compared to just 20 years ago, due to an overwhelming shift of technology. The fruitfulness culture is better suited to take care of the development of the modern IT- thoughts; like "Don't be evil" "Please all-serve all" "Everybody can take part" "Nano-robots will replace the body" "Avatars will create life forever" "Make love and products for the net – not war"!

### **Bronze-age!**

The time-setting of the book is the Bronze Age, when, in Northern Europe, the temperature was about 2-4 degrees warmer per day than today. Wine was made southern Scandinavia. The women shaved their cunt-hair and the floors were heated with hot stones in a tunnel beginning at the entrance.

Stockholm Sweden 2013 10 10

Yours,

knyaz Rikard

# LEVELS OF THINKING

Here is a schedule over the abstract thinking that is enclosed in the book.

1. The SEX-history of Europe.
2. The Norse-Irish-Anglo-Saxon history of SEX.
3. The quest of the English language.
4. The mind and its dual function in relation to sex.
5. “Walking marriage” as a mind tool for future modern society.
6. The change from horticulture to agriculture and the control of sex.
7. The sex-mingling of the Norse-Irish-Anglo-Saxon cultures.
8. The development of the goddesses vs gods vs god. Sex became bad!
9. Fertility culture vs war culture.
10. Explanation of the most used sex words. The worlds most used words.
11. The origin of Latin in relation to Proto-Germanic, viewed thorough sex.
12. Old bylaws and doings as a tool to describe sex and mind.
13. The solar-year described and linked to sex.
14. The way of choosing leaders, by teeming (making love) in the right time.
15. The roots of the place-names and their links to sex.
16. The name of the week-days, holydays, feast-days explained by sex.
17. The power balance between women and men, viewed thorough sex.

## Chapter 1 - THE LAND OF FRUITFULNESS

Love woke up with a smile. A new morning. The meg, the magic, of a new day.

The weather was awesome. The sun was shining and some rays came into the longhouse through the window, the wind –eye in the end of the big longhouse. The window had it's flap that covered the hole, to open for when fire and close during the night.

She pulled of the fell. The others were still asleep. It was warm outside. She came out in the village and saw the folk working and the kids were playing. She loved her calm tribe.

Love was young and handsome. Her blond hair was gathered with a snood, in a ponytail, that passed her shoulders.

She thought of the life in the village, so many children. She loved children, although she had not any of herself yet. She wanted her baby to come at Yulemonth, that is midwinter solstice so her baby would become the leader of the tribe. But birth to a child was to be later. Now she had to travel to many places, to Knowth, Dowth and Newgrange among other holy places.

Yesterday around the fire, one of visitors had told about the south where there was war, theft, burglary, rape, looting. Horrible stories. She did not know the word rape until yesterday.

So strange, why use force when everybody wants to make love she thought. Just to ask somebody else or take part in the towing of the Sun-wheel and take part in the group-love at the fucking-ploughing. The bylaws of fruitfulness.

Love thought of the “walking marriage”. That the children always stayed with the mother's family. The brother of the mother or her father became the Alderman for the children. The father was there of course, but he was in his tribe. When a couple decided not to be a twain anymore they just talked it over with the alderwomen and then they split. No fight about belongings. The divorce was already done. Things were not important. Things belonged to all. The visitor had said the many quarrels came from wedded couples breaking up and their families could not agree about the belongings and then the fight began. The visitor told that now they checked the women all the time to find out who the father was only to safe-guard the belongings. Greed had spread. Greed was a sickness.

Awful, Love thought of the squabbling families. Why don't they sing, freak and teem like normal folks. Strange. Love loved the “walking marriage” it was so cool, so awesome. No strings, no hang-ups. Freedom to try one another. Flirt, and flirt, and then pick the ones you liked. Usually everybody had four steady flirts. Often the couples became twains, that is they were together for a long time and the handfastening bylaw took over. This was new bylaw. With a withe they tied the twain together by the knees to see if they could walk in step. Many lived together for the whole life

Love strolled slowly through the village. The longhouses were neatly done. The hay was nicely staged under shelter. She smelled the wonderful smell of newly baked bread and she got some beetroots from a neighbor who smiled and she smiled back.

The longhouses and the barns were lined up along a way that led to the Maypole, the Rod.

The Rod was the center of the town. She had heard about Irminsul the huge rod below the Angles land. Her village had a much smaller rod but it was good looking and she was so proud of it.

This rod were about 100 feet high and had awesome, winsome carvings all around that told about the times that had been and the bylaws.

Love past the enclosed fields with the holy horses. She thought of the Horse god Horsa among the Anglo-Saxons. The horses were strong and were smeared with red-ochre for the rituals to take place.

Love look at the horse-dicks. She loved them. She felt how she was getting wet. She mused how she had taken the "Völse" the groomed horse-dick filled with onion spices and fixed with linen and smeared with good smelling oil and put into her on the wigbed at Midsummer-bylaws.

Now all the horses were strolling in the fields. All that muscles, she hummed to her self.

What a wonderful day. She was so happy.

She walked further to the west where she saw the wigbed of stone, three feet high and 10 feet wide. Enough for three twains to lay and teem at the same time on the wigbed. Love stepped onto the 660 yards long cause-way that led to the wigbed. From the causeway she saw the goddess-acre, the were fucking-by-law, the holy ploughing with the wooden ard, took place every spring, when the land, the earth was ready to be teemed with seeds. The holy seed from the chosen man and the chosen seed from last year. The blend of seeds.

Love met Karla, the settra-girl, who helped the teeming twains at the wigbed, to put the cock in the right hole and to gather the seed and the women-squirt that spilt into the grounded round holes of the stone wigbed. It was her duty to do the blend of seeds.

Love hey, do you want to follow me to the hawthorn-bushes?

Yes, good thought. I love hawthorns.

I will make some hawthorn jam, if there are any left, Karla said.

The young women walked for an hour and a quarter and came to the hawthorn bushes that had a wonderful view over the village and the goddess-acres.

- Look at the studs, they look so horny, I love those big dicks, Karla said and smiled with her whole ansyn.

The young women laid on the sloping hill so they could see far away and soon they fell asleep.

They woke up of the noise from twains cuddling nearby and they could see at least 3 twains playing with each other.

Love and Karla loved the view of twains making love.

Afterwards Love and Karla strolled back to the village to make jam of the hawthorn.

They had gathered a bag full, without any effort at all. There was so much in the woods and on the fields.

Love felt happy.

Karla, we will see “Tir na nOg” when we will come to Ireland.

Yes, the “Land of Young” that is the land for us !

Yes, I’m so thrilled. Looking forward to see this it. But mun! “Tir na nOg” is also here. They way we see it. We are forever young in our hugs, thus “Tir na nOg”!

Yes, we bring our “walking marriages or weds” and our “Tir na nOg”, said Karla.

And join with all the tribes and we ’ll see the fullsome “Tir na nOg”. Everybody around the seas, along the shores, think the same, and see the same sky, the same stars, the same moon and the same sun.

The girls went back to have crayfish with the other kinsmen and of the Vanir tribe.



## Chapter 2 - THE FIRST FOLK FIGHT

They cut off his dick. Alf felt his blood pulse from his body.

Around him stood the Aesirs, who laughed grimly. They stabbed into Alf again and cut off his head. The Aesirs had chopped the dick off and killed a Van, a man from the coast. The Aesirs came from inland and wanted change and victory. They were armed with spears and metal swords. They had crossed the strait by boat even though they hated water. Lakes and oceans were considered to be damaging to the sun. They had made it ashore, around twenty men, on the land that was called the Skades islands, Skanör, in the southern part of the Baltic Sea, and there the Aesirs had watched how the Vanir people conducted their rituals, the Sidrs. The Aesirs waited for a long time in the bushes for a suitable opportunity. While the Vanirs were dancing around the carved and holy stone, which they called Stallar, the Aesirs had attacked with raised swords. They had not met any resistance and cut down the unarmed men and women. Spears flew through the air and scattered the women who stood shielding the holy stone, the Stallar. The Aesirs caught Alf and held his arms and legs while one Aesir took out his sword and another stuck his spear between Alf's legs to hold up his cock. The Aesir sword cut through and blood and flesh scraps sprayed all around.

Alf from Alfhem roared in pain and screamed a Seid, the words of power that would destroy them one day.

The words would beat them. The Vanirs' Sidr was the strongest weapon in the long run, for no one can stop the free flow of words.

"The magic of the holy free words will destroy you!", he shouted in rage while the life pumped out from between his legs. To stop him talking, one Aesir lifted his sword once more and cut off Alf's head with one blow. Blood spurted straight upwards and the Aesirs were sprinkled with the red blood of Alf.

Dead bodies missing limbs, dead men and women, lay everywhere around the Stallar. Some limbs still twitched as the Aesirs wiped their bloodied spears and swords on the linen of the dead bodies and their white and yellow tunics.

"Now that shut you up, you babbling crow. We will win. Wotan will always win. March wins," screamed the Aesirs, waving their swords.

"We will win great spoils. We come from the inland. There are many men who want to find themselves new land. We will take all that we can find. We will burn everything we see. We will take all the gold that we can in the same way that we have taken this gold ring that was lying on the Stallar," said the man with the dark grey beard in a wolf-fur and bull-leather hood, as he raised his hand with the ring as a sign of victory. "We will build fortresses that you can never tear down and which will stand for years. We will attack everyone and everything as soon as we get to them, for we are unbeatable, we cannot be defeated, we will always win. At any moment we can attack, at any moment we can emerge suddenly from nowhere and steal whatever we want. You, Vanirs, should tremble whenever you see us," continued the darkbearded one. He was named Chief Walter.

They calmed down when they realized that there was no one around. But two women in yellow tunics had escaped, told a one-eyed Aesir, whose other eye had been gouged out at the market in a quarrel about a fixed game of dice. He pointed towards the coast on the other side of the bay, or wik. All the Aesirs went into a violent rage and destroyed everything they had conquered; clothes were torn and

trampled underfoot, the gold ring was thrown into the sea, bodies were stabbed even more, the Vanirs' round wood-tokens of the sun signs were destroyed. The long bronze-lurs were twisted, the great bronze axe was folded as if it was sourdough and dumped in the woods. The Aesirs camped and began to build a wooden fortress. As time passed, the wooden fortress got higher and higher.

The Vanirs living nearby in Vanhem had been completely dismayed by the attack and decided to face these evil men with Galders, Seid and rhymes filled with Megi, i.e. power and spiritual strength. They called on Gullveig. No one could measure up to her in power or knowledge. Soon, rumours began to spread that Gullveig had arrived and these rumors also reached the Aesirs' wooden fortress. Gullveig told the Vanirs to go to the wooden fortress at night and light a small fire in her awed body while she was standing on a carriage. To the wagon that carried Gullveig the Vanirs tied the horse that every year, at Midsummer, dragged the holy sun-disc. That horse was also holy. Until the time was right, Gullveig sat on a Skjalf, a high wooden stand, gathering Megi. The Vanirs came at night and let their long, high-pitched bronze-lurs sound so that the Aesirs would fear their arrival. The sound came from all directions and the clamour was deafening.

Gullveig allowed herself to be rolled forward to the wooden fortress and let the Seid flow. The words came pouring from her mouth. The Galders and Seid spread around the wooden fortress and seemed to encircle the Aesirs, who rushed blindly forward and hurled their edge-irons in the Vanir tribe.

The Spears impaled Gullveig, who seemed to be dead. Spears rained again over the Vanirs.

Then the Vanirs disappeared without a trace and only the Seid stayed and rang in the Aesirs' ears.

The next night the same thing happened. Gullveig stood there and let herself be pierced by edge-irons. The Aesirs rushed out again only to find that the Vanirs had disappeared. Gullveig returned for a third time. Asarna hurled a third time their edge-irons over the vanir tribe, only to find that they again had disappeared. The Aesirs became worried. There was magic in Vanhem. There was no doubt about that. The men became worked up and stopped obeying orders. The grey-bearded man in wolf-fur demanded obedience but got only evil eyes in response. He shouted:

“There is no magic. Gullveig cannot live. We have pierced her three times with our Wotan spears.”

“Yet she lives,” was heard the quiet answer from the hoard of Aesirs.

“You do not understand what witchcraft there is here,” said the one-eyed man, glaring at the leader with the wolf-fur and cold brown eyes.

The grey-bearded man just shook his head and walked away.

A violent quarrel arose between the remaining men about how much magic was hidden in the woods and “the beings” that wanted to hurt them; what the landtrolls would do, the little earth people who would come crawling out of the ground and eat up the Aesirs during the night. Fear spread more and more among the Aesirs. Rumours and stories got worse and worse.

The next night the same thing happened. This time, the Aesirs did not rush out of the wooden fortress, the Borough of the Aesirs, but stayed inside. The Vanirs had now drained water into a ditch

They had dug around the wooden fortress. Again, Gullveig let the Seid out over the landscape and the whole place echoed. The echo-sound of her reethe, voice, came from all directions, headways.

The water seeped into the wooden fortress and the wood rotted. Time passed and

Aesirs stayed in the castle, filled with the fear of witchcraft. Gullveig had cast a spell on the water and after nine nights the Vanirs came back to the field with the Galder. They went straight to wooden fortress and tore it down. They met no resistance. Eight Aesirs lay dead. The rest had fled.

Gullveig then spoke to the Vanirs about the foretelling Völuspa, in which it is said that the Aesirs would come again and bring more violent death. They could strike at any time and without mercy. No one was safe any longer. But there would come a day when the Aesirs would have to withdraw. Then Idavallen will flourish and the Aesir Ragnarök would become dispelled for ever.

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## Chapter 3- HOW ABOUT LOVE BECAME WI-GYDJA

Love, the daughter of the prominent Hof-gydjan Leufsta, was early destined for the Gydja position. Love knew what this meant. She had been drilled for a long time on her knowledge of the stars, in law, in the practice of medicine and on the Sun God Ull's links to the Earth Goddess Njård (Lat. Nerthus).

All this she knew by heart, remembering the old rhymes that were always taught to coming young Gydjas and Gothis, the holy women and men of the Vanir bylaws.

Love would get her Wi-gydja-token on the third full moon after Midsummer eve in the year 2287. The Wi-gydja-dubbing of Love was a great event in the village of Rode land in Western Baltic coast and Holy Orders various bylaws were scattered over and over again. The Rode's people, those who worshipped the Rods, The Rosers waved farewell to Love and her friends-to-follow, Ullfrid, Williard and Karla, Love's cloth-setter and helper, when they set out to Vaurberg in the south, the old site of Wi-gydja-dubbings in this part of the Vanir land.

The Vanir land stretched out along the coasts of the Baltic Sea, North Sea and the Anglian and Saxon lands.

About three hundred participants, sharetakers and caretakers from different families had gathered to dub new Gydjas and Gothis. Many had already gathered around the holy barrow of the goddess Vaur by the time Love and her friends arrived at the scene. Many had a lot to tell each other about the latest happenings since the last dubbing: who had married whom and what had been sold to whom and for how much.

It was not yet dawn but the buzz grew with each moment that the Sun God, Ull, climbed in the sky.

The day grew with Megi, the new spring power of the morning that each new day brings. Love smiled and looked down towards the holy site. She and her friends rushed to ride the last bit down to the event and started to unload their skin packs. Ullfrid and Williard traveled with great skill. Karla and Love went down to the marketplace that surrounded holy site, to view all the things that were spread on the ground and set out on stands and shelves. The Earth Goddess Njård's stomach.

Filed bone-pipes, needles, whistles of straw, furs, thin cloth and warped cloth with Vanir tokens all lay shining in the sun god Ull's light.

Karla and Love walked around and just enjoyed the many good-looking and magical things.

They walked around until they lost each other.

Love looked up at the holy site, which was on a hill that reached towards the river. The river coiled around both the holy square and market square. At the far end, on the hilltop, Love could see how Hopt and Bond were swaying in the air. The wide cloth strips with Vanir magic tokens, Hopten, hung on the gracefully twisted ropes. The ropes were called Bonds. Inside the bonds Love could see a Stallar, a Holy Stone with carved holy signs. Twenty-seven feet further on from the last Hopt began the cliff face. The cliffs plunged straight down into the river. Hopt and Bond with a Stallar in the middle is called a Harg. This holy place was really beautiful, without a doubt the most beautiful place in the landscape, thought Love and felt feelings of well-being when she saw the Vi-stallar, that is the Holy site Vi or Wy, meaning "We". When "We" are together then happiness is here. Love let her thoughts

fly and thought once again about how she had been chosen by her tribe, the Rosers, to bring the bylaws to the next kin of Rosers.

Love went to a stall trading amber. She smiled at the woman on the other side, who showed her a finely cut stone. Love looked long at the stone and returned it with a sigh as she knew it would be too costly to buy the finely polished stone.

She was about to walk away when she felt the pain of a sharp slap.

Love turned around. There stood Breitgera from the Aesir tribe, cocky and bitchy, Love looked at Breitgera, who was tall, a few inches under six feet, thus half a foot taller than Love herself. Breitgera wore a grey tunic with the Aesir hammer sign in the middle of the chest.

“Ha! Are you to be dubbed a Wi-gydja? What a shame! You know nothing about bylaws and doings. Nothing! You’ll faint in front of the Stallar. You, Vanirs, have the wrong doings and bylaws. You will lose the fight”, said Breitgera, her sharp mouth opening to give an evil laugh. Breitgera’s dark eyebrows had grown together. Her right ear hung awry after an earlier fight.

Breitgera threatfully took a step forward and stroked back her grey-brown short hair. Love made a quick rough estimate if it were possible to talk to Breitgera, who had been her enemy since many Midsummers ago, and saw few ways out of talking.

Breitgera made a quick attack and tried grabbing Love’s neck. Love slipped easily away and stared straight into Breitgera’s green eyes.

Love pulled back slowly and took a fighting position for the battle.

Now the other Vanirs began to watch the upcoming fight and they formed a ring around the two fighting girls. The ground was gooey mud. Love looked around. There were no sharp rocks or other hard things within the ring formed by the crowd. Love wondered if Breitgera had a knife hidden under her kirtle, but that did not seem to be the case.

Breitgera rushed in and sent a blow to Love's head but changed her mind at the last moment and threw up her left muddy foot against Love's temple. Love could hardly make up her right forearm as a shield, but fell in the mud. Breitgera threw herself on Love and pushed her head in the mud.

There did not seem to be much left of Love’s shoulder-length blonde hair and she felt the taste of mud in her mouth.

Love felt the despair spread and responded with a kick to Breitgera’s stomach. Breitgera fell backwards but managed to grab the collar of Love's kirtle, which was torn asunder with a cracking sound. Love felt the cloth snapping in the neck. Love felt a burning pain in her skin. Breitgera stood up and lifted Love’s gown to the sky as a sign of seger (triumph). Love was sitting naked in the mud and wiped the mud from her ansyn (face).

Love saw that a goat came in between the legs of the viewers. The goat took position right behind Breitgera. Love jumped up, gathered her strength and jumped forward towards Breitgera, who fell backwards over the goat, which ran away in terror.

The audience roared when Breitgera fell into the mudpool. Breitgera, however, got quickly back on her feet and got ready to fight again. Love backed off a few steps.

Some of the viewers roared again and Love turned around to see who it was. It was enough for Love to lose attention and Breitgera got in a punch on Love's nose. First was a sharp pain then Love felt the blood run over her mouth. Outraged, she dried the blood off her mouth and rushed straight forwards with a lowered head. Love crashed straight into Breitgera's midriff and Breitgera lost her breath, fell in the mud and remained lying. With blood running down her mouth, Love ran to Breitgera, who gasped for air. Love took back her kirtle with a jerk and the crowd screamed with delight. To end the duel, she kicked Breitgera in the groin so she howled in pain.

Now the Waring guards arrived at the place of the battle and six men and women grabbed Love and a firm voice spoke. "This is the end of the fight. This is a Holy Weekend! Do you understand?" said a gruff, strong woman in a white dress with Lund-gydja signs. Love nodded lamely and held her kirtle around her body.

"Which family do you belong to and what name are you wearing?" asked a dark Lund-gydja with lots of markings on her chest and back.

"I am of the Roden tribe and my name is Love," Love replied quietly and shamefully.

"Love, we are going to talk to your clan. You are here to be dubbed a Wi-gydja. You should set a good example. You and your family are renowned. This is not the way it should be," said the stern Lund-gydja who was holding Love with a firm grip. Love looked up silently. The crowd had split. A second Lund-gydja in white cloth lifted Breitgera, who also got a scolding and was towed to a longhouse.

"Remember that Weekend is here and no more scrabbling," said the harsh, sharp Lund-gydja and shook her head warningly.

The Waring guards then walked off to the huts by the river.

Love slowly put on her tattered kirtle and tied it up at the throat. With heavy steps she walked towards the Rosers' hut.

"Where did you go?" Williard wondered, her three-manning, a medium-light man, just over six feet tall and in his twenties.

"And to look like that! What happened?" he asked, astonished.

"I got into a fight with Breitgera from the Aesir-clan," Love answered meekly.

"Well, well, well. Breitgera have the strength to fight, I know you," said Williard, not without admiration.

"She lost her breath after I head-butted her in the belly. Then the Waring –guards came and took me by the ear. They said they would talk to my family."

"Aye aye," Williard said sternly. "This thing might be regarded as minor but the Aesir-clan is growing in numbers because their relatives are from Hallstadt, Urnenfelder and Stettweg are moving in. There will be a fight in the long term."

"Do you have the virp with you? I need to spin a new thread to mend my cloth, Love said to Williard," looking at him demandingly.

"Perhaps there the virp is inside the hut. Look for it yourself. I'm going down to the market," said Williard and walked towards his horse.

Love crawled into the hut. The light spread vaguely, but once inside the hut she found to her delight her uncle Hauskuld.

“Uncle Hauskuld, did you come?” she asked, at the same time thinking that the question was dumb.

Without answering her question, he said with a firm voice.

“You're going to Newgrange to take part in the feasts,” so now you know.

“You want me to go to Newgrange, in the land of the Irish? Isn't it too early for me?”

Love replied worriedly over such a sudden assignment.

“It may seem that way but the time is right, we have no one who can view the goddess Njård's and Sun God Ull's wishes like you can, no one knows the star movements like you do, no one knows the goddesses' measures like you do and nobody carves the holy rock-signs like you can.

Six men and women from the land of the Rosers will travel on with you. Naturally, your Wedding-settra Karla will go with you. Maybe someone else will join you on the road, since you will visit many Vanir villages on the way to Newgrange,” said Uncle Hauskuld thoughtfully.

Love sat down on a sheepskin. Getting to go to Newgrange had been one of her long nourished dreams. But wasn't she too young? Twenty-five Hightide -midsummers had been carved into the rock since her birth. Love's thoughts went round in her head.

“Love, I see what you're thinking. There will never be a better time,” said Uncle Hauskuld harshly.

“Glad news,” Love thought and began to look for the virp.

“But what happened?” Uncle Hauskuld asked when he saw Love's bloodied ansyn in the dim light.

“Wow, I had nearly forgotten. I got into a fight with Breitgera from the Aesir-clan,” Love answered and squinted.

“I could almost guess that,” Uncle Hauskuld answered worriedly and shook his head. He soaked a bit of a fur and washed Love's ansyn so that her fine, thin, well-marked features were shown once again. He rubbed the bright eyebrows with the soggy bit of fur to get rid of the last of the blood. The blood had flowed down her slender neck and was also in her finely chiseled clavicle.

Love spun thread to be able to mend her gown.

“We, the Rosers, have built a ship named Noatun, good for the sea, a Njord ship. You will row along the coast south of the Baltic island of Öland and you'll visit Ale Stones. Then you will come to the land of the Danes and you should take part in the Rode feasts. Then trek to the land of the Frisians and from there you make your way across the channel to the land of Anglers and the Saxons. You'll visit Stonehenge and Woodhenge. You will row up the River Avon and across the strait to Newgrange. Wherever you are, you know that everyone is of the Vanir tribes, who know us Rosers well. Love, do not forget to send greetings from your mother, Hofgydjan Leufsta. The trip is now an adventure. Don't forget to be careful,” Uncle Hauskuld said meaningly.

Love asked Uncle Hauskuld about the possible hindrances that might pop up along the way. Uncle Hauskuld was glad that Love had agreed to go. Of course Love was young but she was knowledgeable

and showing all the other tribes that you had the most knowledge about the stars was the most important.

Since his sister, Love's mother the Hof-gydja Leufsta, had a lung sickness and laid in her sick bed, the Rosers had no given heir but Love. The father of Uncle Hauskuld, the Hof-good man Olof, was so weak during long time syne that he could not carry out such a long trip. The Hof-good man Olof had to be carried to and from the long houses. It would not be long until his Barrowing, Uncle Hauskuld thought quietly. Uncle Hauskuld's own mother, IngGerd, did not want Love to travel. Love was IngGerd's most beloved kin. IngGerd had taught Love all of her healing knowledge, all the healing herbs, all the useful plants. Love might be forced to stay at Newgrange, or anywhere else, for any reason. That twist with IngGerd he would take care of in the future. If something happened to Love on the road, Uncle Hauskuld would feel guilty for the rest of his life. But he had spoken with the goddesses, who had given him and the Reading an omen that Love would travel. The goddesses would safeguard her. Love's mother, the Hof-gydja Leufsta, had said that Love thereto was trained and skilled and that it was now her turn to shoulder the responsibility, the Answar.

Uncle Hauskuld hoped that Love's calmness would solve the worst hindrances. Love's fight with Breitgera had been only a token of the growing split between the two tribes, two ways of thinking. Two ways of living. Two ways of making food.

Love took out the bone needle. With skilled movements she sewed the newly spun thread into her gown and soon the kirtle looked the same as before, but with a few hanging threads. Love straightened the clothes pins, fibulae and left the hut.

The Sun God Ull is warming. The glorious rays filled with day-Megi fell on her bright ansyn when she climbed up onto a small rock. From the rock she could see how the Gydjas, Gothis and learlings were preparing for the dubbing of the Wi-gydjas. Love strolled slowly back to the hut. The Rosers slept. Love got down on her thick goatskin and fell asleep straight away.

The morning dawned and Love awoke slowly. The smells around the hut were strong. The heather smell found its way into the hut. Uncle Hauskuld was already sitting up, preparing for the day's events.

"Today is the day you must remember everything your Mother, the Hofgoden Olof and IngGerd have taught you," Uncle Hauskuld said cravngly to Love.

"Yes, all the rhymes are there. The bylaws I know like running water and the lore-tales I have told many times to others and to myself. I can draw all the movements of the stars in the sand. Also, I have the holy tokens in my bag. Every time I hold each of them in my hand they give me all the power, all the Megi, I need to rhyme as the bylaws require." Love smiled happily and looked down at the bag.

Ullfrid came into the hut with a birch cup with brisk Egtveds-wine, a mixture of honey, lime and cranberry that became strong. Ullfrid who came from of the next village to Love's, Kåtorp, was twenty-nine Midsummers and had blond curly hair. Love thought Ullfrid's hair was like coiling white moss.

- Due to the old doings you shall bring forth drink to the Wi-gydja so that she may read Sidr, tellings over it.

Ullfrid handed her the birch cup. Love watched the box carefully. The finest birch bark that had could be found had been used to craft the drinking cup. The bark had been carved with the Rosers' sign, "Roden". "Roden" looked like a totem pole, a cult pole. The cup was therefore holy. Love gently



opened the lid and smelled the liquor. A smell of honey, lind-bloom and cranberry shot up from the birch cup. Love breathed deeply. Great, she thought, what a feeling.

Ullfrid looked out the opening of the hut.

“People are gathering,” he said as he squinted up at the sun god, Ull. To honor Ull he lifted his hands and spread his fingers towards the sun and then bent down to touch the Earth Goddess Njård. Actually, he would have first touched the Earth and then Hallowed Sun Ull.

Now we have to go, otherwise we will be too late, Uncle Hauskuld said in challenging way. Love got ready. Williard and Karla were already outside the hut and when Love finally came out, they went down to the beach because that way was the easiest to get up onto the cliff. The river snaked around the long half-island.

Up there in the holy site, the Harg, I will be dubbed Wi-gydja, Love thought. I hope that I will remember the dubbing forever, Love continued to think to herself as they walked on the beach by the cliff.

Sun God Ull's holy rays gave more heat. When Ull was highest in the sky the dubbing would take place. The Rosers walked quickly and they soon left the marketplace with all tents, houses, huts behind. Up on top of the cliff, they could catch a glimpse of the preparations. Almost all the people from the marketplace and more Vanirs who had come that day had gathered along the rock uphill. Gotlanders, Jyller, Angler, Västergoters, Östergoters, Trönners, a few Frisians, Drehtefolk, Dalfolk, Irish and more, all of them stood along the High causeway up the cliff.

The High causeway measured a thousand yards, or 651 Orkney Yards or 1771 feet.

Love and the Rosers went between the two ranks of people who eagerly cheered on. Love recognized four friends from the Gutters tribe and a little later waved to a few friends, this time from the village Vara of the Westgoter tribe.

There was also Breitgera, even though she was of another troth. Everyone had the right to attend. Everything was open. Breitgera grinned when her and Love's eyes met. The Rosers carried on walking up the High causeway on the rocky slope. After five hundred yards it got steep, really steep. At one point the slope fell away abruptly, not as the trodden High causeway. At these places were no Vanirs, they simply had no place. Love guessed that the distance down to the river was about eighty-two feet. Stepping wrongly and falling would be dangerous but also give shame for a long time. Love, Karla, Ullfrid, Williard and Uncle Hauskuld walked on upwards. Love knew what place they would take. She had been told by the harsh Lund-gydja the day before. The Rosers would stand around the Harg at the upper left Hopts, next to the Angles. Steady beats from the bronze drums led towing women and men to the Feast, to their seats. The buzz grew and Love could barely hear what Ullfrid said to her. When the last of the Rosers, Williard, took his place, one of Lunda-gydjorna gave the sign to the next tribe of lored women to go forward. This time it was the folks from Jylland from the Danish islands, who made their way up the High causeway.

Now and then rang rap and whistles from a well-cut reed pipe.

The Whistles half waddling, half seagull-screaming sounds urged the towing people to attention . When finally the last Vanir tribe stood on the site, the heavy booming sound of a pair of bronze lurs sounded across the bay. The sound bounced back and forth, creating a stunning echoing sound. The bronze-lurs' tones seemed to come from almost any side. Accompanied by bronze-lurs' roar, Wi-

gydjan Disa walked to the Harg and into the Harg's left end. With a skillfully trained hand motion Vigydjan Disa signed to all towing men and women to sit down. Vigydjan Disa was dressed in a yellow ankle-length kirtle with Solar and circles signs and ships gracefully sewn into the sleeves and to the edges of the dress. The Vi-gydja Disa held a Sun Signs with four fields in the middle, which marked the four seasons and the split of the time. Vanirs measured the time from Midwinter to Midsummer, from Springtime Eve to the fall eve and then wend back to Midwinter. A Harg-gydja in a light blue tunic with fewer Solar, circles and ships than the Wi-gydja Disa called the names of all the Gothi, Gydjas and learlings that were to be dubbed to a higher rank. They stood in the four-sided Harg.

Then she called out the names of those who were to be wed. The people who are to get wed are nine in number, five women and four men, all drilled in healing knowledge, reckoning, Star movements, time, seidr, manners, bylaws and the way the Vanir tribes were held together by a smart system of rewards and gifts.

The Reading of Gydjas took place in front of the ten and half feet high Rod, which was eighty-four feet from the Harg. Lunda-gydjan in her white ankle-length robe gave a sign to the learlings to sit in a circle in front of the Reading of the Gydjas. Now the hearing took place. Every Gydja or Gothi asked nine questions to one of the learlings. Regarding any Gydja or Gothi who would get a higher rank the elderly quaethed many lored words.

Love was asked if the nineteen year old round of the Sun of an old Gothi with a white long beard.

"You, Love, by Rosers tribe, tell us now how it is for us very important nineteen year old round of the sun goes."

"Highest lored Harg-gothi," replied Love with a loud and clear voice, "The nineteen year old round of the sun hits full moon at the winter solstice every nineteenth year. But there is a but, because the direction of the full moon's rise and fall at the Midwinter solstice changes due to the circle of the Moon's twist. We also need to calculate the slope of the Earth Goddess Njård. She lets the Earth tilt. It takes 1368 and a half years for the Earth to rotate one full turn. At the full moon during the midwinter solstice we grind a notch in the rock or in the line with the sun towards the land line where the Sun God Ull goes down, thus every nineteenth year we make a cut to the Earth Goddess Njård's and the Sun God Ull's honor," Love replied calmly and surely.

The hearing continued with the healing of sicknesses.

"You, Maja of the Jyller tribe, foretell us now for all the healing herbs to be given to the Goddess Eir," asked the harsh and severe Harg-gydja who read louse of Love the other day.

Maja, whose name came from maying of the maypole, that is to put leaves around the maypole, was tall and slender with straight grey-blonde hair, began the list.

The hearing carried on until the Sun God Ull's rays diminished in strength.

Reading of tokens, counting, Star cunningness, galdars, songs, bylaws, tales, all of their knowledge was tested.

The sun god Ull signed that Love and six other had made the trial. Two learlings failed and had to wait three years for the next opportunity.

Three Lundagydjor, all in dazzling white robes, set the dubbed in a straight line.

“Fasten ye hands,” told the oldest Lunda-gydja. The dubbed made a ring with Gydjas.

“Now let us dance nine times around the Rod,” said the same Gydja, glancing towards the tribe kinsmen. The ring of the dubbed and the Gydjas moved around the Rod while the kinsmen clapped the rhythm and whistles of straw led the dance in long, rolling, alluring songs.

After they had danced nine laps around the Rod, each of the dubbed was led to the grey stone Stallar, nine feet long, three feet high and five feet wide. Above the Stallar stood the seven feet long Long Rolf, Lunda-gothi by rank. Long-Rolf took a ring-bracelet of gold and held it up so that everyone could see. He doesn’t need to hold it up, Love thought to herself.

There was a murmur from the gathered throng.

“Maja of the Jyller tribe, Sven of the Dala tribe, the Snake of the Westgoters tribe, Love of the Roser tribe, Turid of the Trönnar tribe, Lycke of the Aro tribe and Starkad of the Skan tribe, you may now show your gifts to the Stallar said Wi-gydja Disa with a high voice. The dubbed picked up their gifts and gave the gifts along the old bylaws. Karla gave Love a Birch box of Egtvedsvin. The boxes were put at the front of the Stallar with each tribe sign visible. Each of the kinsmen could now see which tribe that put the greatest effort into carving the holy signs on the boxes.

The Wi-gydja Disa was now nine laps around the Stallar and held the birch box with her hand of the Sun.

In her left hand she held the sign of the Moon, a waning moon.

When the holy tide was over the seven-foot Gothi Long-Rolf gave a sign to the dubbed to sit down in front the Stallar. Long-Rolf, in a long white cloth with Lunda-Gothi signs, took a golden ring and held it with his left hand. The Wi-gydja Disa, in a yellow robe with long, flowing blonde hair, took a few steps forward, grasped the ring with her right hand and said:

“Friends of the Vanir kin. This ring is our token that we belong together. The ring also signifies togetherness and knowledge. Only those who have knowledge in all fields are part of nature, part of the whole. Without knowledge man becomes a straw in the wind. The ring tokens the work of the Gydjas. The Holy work of the Gydjas is to ensure that the knowledge of the Earth is transferred from generation to generation, from one kin to the next. Each and every Gydja and Gothi have always live up to the good bylaw. If you fail in your work and all which belongs to it, it is taken away from the woman or man and she or he will lose this rank Gydja or Gothi.

Say after me honestly:

I swear and warrant, "

"I swear and warrant," said all the dubbed.

"To always keep the work of the Gydjas and Gothis in high honor"

"To always keep the work of the Gydjas and Gothis in high honor"

"This is my oath. I will never fail"

"This is my oath. I will never fail "

“Sven, Starkad, Maja, Snake, Lycke, I declare you, with the Megi of the Goddesses, as Lunda-gydjas and Lunda-gothis.

Love of the Roser kin and Turid of the Trönnar tribe, I swear you, with the Megi of the Goddesses, as Wi-gydjas.

Take your Gydja-rings as a sign of the rank you now hold.

Given the date that is today in the name the Earth Goddess Njörds at the Vaurberg.”

The Wi-gydja Disa let go the grip of the ring and gave it to Long-Rolf, who turned to all the kinsmen at the feast.

“In the view of these nine nine witnesses I give you, Love of the Roser kin, the token of the rank Wi-gydja,” quothed Long-Rolf as he stretched out the golden ring.

Love went forward, shivering, her knees weak before all the eyes. She had never felt so small in her life in front of this giant. Even if she threw her hand in the air, she would still not reach over his head.

“Love, you are hereby one of the Gydjas of the Vanir tribe. Stretch out your moon-hand,” urged the Wi-gydja Disa.

- Love reached out her left arm. Long-Rolf took the golden ring and pushed it up to Love’s upper arm. Love felt how Long-Rolf used his strength to put the ring on her arm.

The ends of the ring were like handles. When Long-Rolf bent the ring it pinched in her skin. Love had never seen anything more beautiful in her life. Three turns of gold inscribed with signs of the Wi-gydja. The Gydja-ring did not move. It already felt like a part of her body.

“Like a part of me, a link to the life around,” thought Love proudly”.

Love felt her nose dripping and blew it on her hand as she realized that she was being watched by a lot of people. She bent down and smeared the snot on the grass.

One by one the chosen became dubbed by the Wi-gydja Disa at the Stallar and the tall Gothi wrenched to Gydjarings around their moon-arms.

The Wi-gydja Disa commended the wagon to be pulled by two horses to come up the hill and up to the Stallar. Four strong oakwheels carried the wagon. The wagon, or wain, measured nine feet long and twelve feet wide. Along the tables on all four sides were found all Vanir tribes’ tokens: ships, Sun Eves, Moon eves, cup-carvings, Rods, rings, rounds, bronze-lurs, horns and of course Brisingamen, Freya’s holy ring.

A cunning horse learner rolled the wagon. The wagon was covered with a red-ochra cloth. The wagon passed the carved Rod to the Stallar. The new Gydjas and Gothis sat in the wagon together with Long-Rolf.

“Now we are off down the slope,” laughed Edla at the reins. “Hold on, we’re going fast.”

The Wi-gydja signed to the horn-blowers and the drummers to play.

“Let’s hear the drums keeping the beat, drummers,” said the Wi-gydja and continued.

“Sit down, there is more to eat with your eyes,” Disa shouted with a high voice.

“Friends of Vanir tribe. The Wi-Gydja-dubbing was sealed since old long syne with hope of fruitfulness with the dubbing-beer to be drunk. Hope of fruitfulness, hope for a good old age, hope for signs of the warm seasons again, hope for women with children, the hope of life, happiness, hope of the foreverness, the hope of Ars and Frithur.

“The Harggydja Erna, you fly like an eagle, can you fly?” The Wi-gydja asked.

“Oh Holy Vigydja. We'll fly,” said Erna, a tall, thin Gydja with high cheekbones, blue eyes and dark hair down to her waist. Erna had adopted eagle-ham, wearing eagle feathers skillfully strung along her arms, back and legs. To further enhance her flying skills, she had sewn brown scraps of cloth along the back side up to her arms, as well as between her legs, down to the ankles. On her head she wore a skillfully painted eagle mask of wood.

“I am, in the Ham of the Eagle, I can fly like an eagle.” Erna smiled and Love saw the tattooed eagle sign on Erna’s forehead when she took off her mask.

The drums slowly eked the beat as Erna took the first dance steps. The hazelnut rassles rattled around her ankles. Nine Gydjas spun a bit of wood, whiners, in the wind that gave a whining sound. Erna danced or swang on smart feet in her eagle dress. The eagle feathers played around her supple body, which was smeared with beaver fat, as was the cloth and some parts of the feathers. Erna neared the Stallar and rounded it nine times before she sighted the protruding ledge. Below was nothing apart from the 135 foot steep cliff and the deep sea. The blue water stared at Love. The rock leaned sharply.

“The eagle flies! The eagle flies! The eagle flies! The eagle flies! The eagle flies!”

The kinsmen’s shouts became louder and more heated. Erna was dancing up and down. She played with the heat of the kinsmen. She rushed to the ledge when she heard that the kinsmen began to really get aroused. The eagle stopped in the very last moment at the tip of the ledge and one could hear a whisper among the crowd. The crowd huddled. Erna swayed back and forth on the ledge. She jumped up and down wended in the air. Erna now felt the Eagle-Megi spread in every part of her body. She rushed at full speed towards the crowd while the drums eked the beat, and bronze-lurs brawled .

The Vigydjan Disa blew a cow horn and shouted:

“Erna, teem our bosom! Teem the sea that gives us life! Give birth to the sea to give us food! Erna, carry the grain from the Rod in your sheath! Let the Ham of the Eagle fly freely!” Erna let her right arm, clad with eagle feathers, touch the hands of the hand-clapping kinsmen. This gave her more speed and strength. She rushed with all speed towards the cliff and made the best jump ever from the ledge and threw herself headlong downhill. The eagle unfurled her feathers. Erna flew. The eagle flew. She was in total Ham of the Eagle. Her kinsmen shouted with excitement and enthusiasm.

“The eagle flies! The eagle flies! The eagle flies! The eagle flies!”

From the wagon love saw how the eagle flew from the ledge. Love was astonished how Erna could steer her body in the air before she took a diving position. A hilarious dive. Right on.

The crowd howled. Happy.

In the water, nine men, Swens, were already swimming to gather the feathers that were lost in the dive.

Around the dive there were small rings on the water. Only some feathers swam around, the sign of a good dive.

Erna came to the surface. From the Harg the brawl from the Bronze-lurs was sounding.

The nine men swam around Erna and together they swam towards the beach.

A low sound was heard from the Harg. Long-Rolf had banged the huge yellow golden Sun-disc with a sheepskin-clad drumstick. The sound spread all over the landscape.

The seven-foot Gothi had given the token along with the old sidr.

The dubbing feast could begin.

In the long-houses, Love and the other dubbed ones were seated near the high-seat and given good ale.

Tribe by tribe came down the cliff to gather near the fire. Erna was carried. Although she was naked, with exception of a shell-kirtle, she seemed clad. Love could not believe her eyes.

The whole of Erna's body was tattoed, carved, with eagles. Along her arms and legs, along her back, everywhere were eagle feathers and eagle signs. There was an eagle on each breast.

When Erna moved, the eagles on her breasts seemed to move towards each other.

Erna was carried to the fire and was given a loathy dubbing ale.

“Skol, new gydjas and Gothis. Here's to you, Ars and Frithur,! Erna said and lifted the ale-mug.

“Let us begin the feast in accordance with the old sidr. Sing the Song ordered the Wi-gydja Disa.”

Long Rolf had lifted up Erna on his hands. Everybody screamed and shouted.

Ullfrid raised a toast to the honor of Erna.

Twice.

“Who are you that toasts so well?” asked Erna and smiled at Ullfrid.

The drums drummed. The hazelnut shakers rattled. The whistles of straw whined.

Ullfrid smiled back and Erna took him by the hand and they went dancing.

Love, Williard, Karla and the rest smiled.

This feast ended late.

## Chapter 4 - GEIRWALD IN HALLSTATT

Geirwald awoke with a jolt. He stared straight up at the roof of the longhouse. His oldest brother, Brecht, was still sleeping deeply next to him, along with his seven other siblings and other relatives. It was crowded. Geirwald's back hurt because he had been forced to lie still all night. He gave Brecht a hefty shove, only to be struck in the temple by his brother's fist a moment later. Geirwald turned and hit his younger sister, Terrasia, in the back.

To get a little more space you have to use a few tricks, thought Geirwald and measured with his thumb and forefinger where he would have the best grip.

He pinched her bare thigh tightly. Terrasia gave a jolt and her knee struck the side of the brother sleeping on the other side, making him scream.

Terrasia, who had a heavy build, matted, dark shoulder-length hair, and eyebrows that had almost grown together, a round chin and quick eyes, did not nip back but hit Geirwald with her pick. Geirwald felt a growing pain and swelling in his hip but stayed calm. To have your own house, he thought longingly. Your own bed and your own hearth. It would be like Wotan's heaven, he dreamed.

Oh Wotan, today I have to win the javelin competition. Or at least be part of the campaign to the north. In the north, I could win riches and find my own piece of land to defend. I have to be part of Chief Walter's military campaigns, thought Geirwald as he let his eyes slide along the middle beam of the ceiling.

Chief Walter has luck on his side and has made many sacrifices to Wotan, as one should, thought Geirwald. Chief Walter had led many military campaigns and his warriors always came back, which calmed Geirwald's kinsmen.

Before he fell asleep, Terrasia bit his ear as further revenge for the nip. Women, especially sisters, need good order, Geirwald thought to himself before falling asleep.

-“Stand up!” screamed Hilbert, Geirwald's father, imperiously and kicked the nearest of his sons.

“We have so much to do and you're sleeping!” he continued. He had a greyish beard and was five feet tall and dressed in well-looked after wolf furs.

Reluctantly Brecht, Geirwald, Terrasia and the other siblings came to their senses to deal with the day's chores. The sun was still low in the sky when Geirwald wrenched the Ard to speed up the ox. Slowly but surely, the ox moved forwards. Geirwald ploughed as well as the ard allowed. He wanted to finish those two acres of land that belonged to his family and then be able to ride the horse to the market to participate in the spear competition. He cursed the ard and its lightness. Geirwald had heard that there were villages that had an ard plated with a cast bronze mixture that allowed them to plough faster and more deeply than a normal wooden ard. It would be good to have one of those instead of toiling here like this, thought Geirwald sourly.

After a very long while, both acres were ploughed and Geirwald could hike back to the village with the oxen and go to market in the next village. He jerked the reins on the horse, dug in his heels and after a short ride he approached the village Hraden, where the yearly spear battle would take place.

Geirwald could already hear grumbling and yelling from the village. He stroked his brown neck-length hair. He was clean-shaven, of medium height and had dark eyebrows and well-marked features.

He slowed his steps. He felt at home in Hraden. Here were both kinsmen and neighbours. He met Sigbaum, a huge and powerful Hraden man of about forty-five years, a close friend of his father. Geirwald jumped down from the horse and they started talking. There was much to tell: who had traded what and when, what new goods had appeared on the market. Most of all the men talked about who would win the javelin competition and who wanted to follow Chief Walter northwards to plunder the Vanir land. Legend had it that the land that was overflowing with gold and riches lying on their sacred stones, fully open to theft.

Sigbaum hinted that Hradbart would win. No one could throw a spear as far and as accurately as Hradbart. Hradbart also had magical forces on his side. That had been clear in the last duel, where Hradbart had driven his spear straight through the other warrior's shield. The spear then ran straight through the warrior's lungs and nailed him to a tree. Chief Walter had already made it known that he wished to have Hradbart with him in the fight against the Vanirs. Sigbaum said that Hradbart also spent every Wednesday, which they had begun to call Wotansday, sacrificing chickens in Wotan's honour. Their blood ran down his spear.

Hradbart will be difficult to beat, thought Geirwald. Sigbaum continued to talk about Kellner, a six foot tall fighter, who had scars all over his body after fighting with different folks and tribes, as well as marks from disease.

"He's so terrible to behold that the other warriors tremble with fear when they see him," said Sigbaum with staring eyes.

"It's difficult to know whether he's laughing or screaming but either way you can see the disgusting boils in his mouth that he seems to chew on. Kellner is a monster, plain and simple."

Sigbaum looked at Geirwald and then said he did not want to scare him and that everything would go well. Furthermore, it's nice to have fighters like Kellner and Hradbart in case the Vanirs resisted. Sigbaum opened the door to his longhouse, stepping inside. He gave a token to a beautiful young slave-girl with long dark hair in order to get something to drink. Uneasy and scared, she went to the next room and fetched a large beaker filled with mead. Geirwald and Sigbaum sat down on two beds of goatskin.

The Slave-girl came in for the second time, this time with two glasses, six thumbs tall and made of green opaque glass. Geirwald had never before seen such riches. He had heard of the existence of things like glass but to see glass in reality was a miracle. The Slave-girl hurried towards the two men but tripped on a bump on the floor and fell. One glass shattered but the second she managed to save.

Sigbaum became angry. He snatched the undamaged glass and handed it to Geirwald. Sigbaum roared to the slave-girl to lie down on the goatskin-bed and pulled up her clothing. She lay on her stomach with her hands over her head, holding the cloth. Sigbaum grabbed a long hazel-wand whip that hung on the wall.

"I'll teach you not to drop worthy things," screamed Sigbaum, so red in the face that Geirwald thought he would lose his beard. The Slave-girl pulled the cloth over her head, sobbing. Her naked white body shone in the dark room. Geirwald stared at her bare behind. Sigbaum took the hazel wand and whipped her bare buttocks. She screamed as she began to feel the pain. Geirwald felt uneasy and horny at the same time but there was nothing he could do. Sigbaum shouted something Geirwald could not hear and



the twigs whizzed through the air again. She jerked her head and screamed. The rod striped her white buttocks, lash after lash. Geirwald could see how the slave-girl's rump changed colour from white to pink and then become redder, then blue. After over 40 lashes, Sigbaum stopped. The slave-girl sobbed loudly. Sigbaum then took a cup of mead and poured it over her whip-burned buttocks. The slave-girl screamed even more loudly when the mead hit her red and blue bottom. Sigbaum laughed roughly and loudly and told her to fetch a wooden pot instead of the broken glass.

Fumbling, half blind, she felt her sore buttocks with her hands and tried to pull the cloth over her body while she went to the second room's opening, which meant that she fell a second time, only to get a another lash over her back from a laughing Sigbaum.

"I'll put in a good word for you with Chief Walter," said Sigbaum as he sat down again.

"Your father asked me to forward this spear to you if you are selected to accompany Chief Walter, but only then. Remember that it is a family spear that will be inherited." Sigbaum let Geirwald look at the spear.

Geirwald let his eyes slide over the spear's engravings - deer, ansyn-masks with horns, snakes, sacred cauldrons, holy signs. The spear seemed to hold the entire world. When Geirwald had carefully munned the signs he gave the spear to Sigbaum.

It was revealed that Geirwald should come one day earlier and the competition would not take place until the next day. Sigbaum offered Geirwald a bed for the night. A great supper was enjoyed and then fell night rest. Geirwald lay down on a hammock a few feet away from Sigbaum's sleeping place. Geirwald managed to catch sight of the slave-girl, who peeked out through the curtain into the other room.

He winked and she smiled back. Phew, he thought. She seems to have recovered. Several of Sigbaum's and Geirwald's relatives came in and lay down beside them. It was crowded here, too.

Geirwald felt good about the day. He brooded over his options. Either he would stay at home in Hallstatt and plough the land, probably in constant quarrel with his brothers, or he would go out and seek happiness elsewhere. It meant danger but also the hope of riches and honour.

Geirwald shuddered when he thought about Kellner. It would not be fun to have him as an enemy. Think if the Vanirs had someone like him - what would happen then? They might not be so frithful and friendly as everyone said after all. Maybe they were big and strong and perhaps appalling, Geirwald kept wondering.

He did not really want to leave. He enjoyed working in Hallstatt but there was no room for him. Their family was too big. The constant squabble with his brothers and sisters gnawed within him. Who would take over the farm? He, Geirwald, did not have a chance. The farm had already been split up by his grandfather. It was too small, only seven acres, not nearly enough for a big family that was expected to increase even further.

His circumstances meant that he did not in fact have a choice. Also, he was curious about what was in the country there, the land on the coast. The coast with all the riches, the coast of the Baltic Sea, North Sea and Anglian Straits, the great ships, all the timing gear, all the bronze, all the gold, all the precious things.

It would probably be fine if he worshiped Wotan and Tiwas enough with his forehead to the ground. He reached his hand up to reach the glass of mead. The slave-girl had filled his glass again. He looked

around to see her but she was not there. The mead ran down his throat and he felt how it helped him to reach the kingdom of sleep.

The sun was low when the spear throwers lined up to take part in the battle. Name by name was called. For each name that was called, another warrior entered into the ranks. When all 49 warriors had been named, the speaker announced the rules of the javelin competition. The spear would be thrown: the leap, in combat, in the ring, and finally the throwers would compete to see who could throw the farthest.

The first battle was to hit two logs or throw the spear between them. They were 24 feet away. To make it harder, the participants were to jump as they threw. In this battle a fighter named Kriegerdorfer came out best. Kriegerdorfer was tall, thin and bony, with hollow eyes, thin, fair hair and an awesome jumping skill. Kriegerdorfer missed none of the seventeen casts. Hradbart came fourth. Geirwald came sixth.

Kellner was near to losing but after threatening the judge with his boils he was allowed to remain in the competition.

The battles continued throughout the day. Geirwald did well, especially in the length cast. Chief Walter followed the races with great interest. Finding the best warriors was a life insurance for Chief Walter. The Warriors should have the right attitude. The promise of future trade would bear the entire cost of the raid once riches were found but until that moment, Chief Walter himself had to pay the whole cost of keeping his fighters on the march. Therefore, it was important to find the right men with the right stamina and readiness.

Chief Walter's men would walk a long way through the Celtic cultural landscape before meeting the Vanirs at the coast. Chief Walter had already made agreements two years in advance with chiefs along the way to keep food, against payment of course, so that no skirmish would happen. The first new moon after the end of Goje month, that is the second month after Midwinter, the raid would begin from Hallstatt.

After the spear competitions, Chief Walter gathered those who wished to go on the raid northwards towards the coast.

Kriegerdorfer won the spear battles with Hradbart in second place.

Geirwald came seventh. Kellner was expelled when, in a fit of rage, he bit one of the holy spears of battle, making his boils burst, and in the same anger ripped off the ear of a rival who stood too close. Geirwald later heard that the bellowing Kellner had eaten the ripped-off ear with his dinner that evening.

117 men were assembled around the old oak to seek a job in Chief Walter's rape and plunder raid. Chief Walter would gladly have taken all of them but he had only storage for 30 - 35 men, at most 35 people but preferably 30. Then there would be less grumbling about the food, which was scarce in any case.

He looked out over the gathered throng. There were all sorts of men: tall and small, healthy and lame, serious and grinning.

He nodded to Kriegerdorfer and Hradbart. Chief Walter now went along the line of men and examined them carefully. A wrong selection now would punish him later. He asked quick-fire questions to some of them and they responded as best they could. Sometimes he just shook his head and walked on and

sometimes he nodded and the chosen one could leave the stage to join Kriegerdorfer, Hradbart and the other chosen ones.

When twenty fighters had been selected, Chief Walter stopped at Geirwald.

Geirwald stiffened. Chief Walter stared into his eyes.

Chief Walter looked at Geirwald and munned his long spear throw. These long casts could come in handy. Chief Walter nodded. Geirwald felt his knees tremble but pulled himself together and went to stand with the other twenty. To his left stood a man with only one eye who was staring at Geirwald. Geirwald looked him in the eye.

Evil gushed out of the cold brown eye. Geirwald shuddered and nearly lost control.

After another ten fighters, Chief Walter came to Kellner. He knew he would have trouble with Kellner but he could scare the foes.

Kellner would certainly eat for two. On the other hand, it might be good to have a monster like him to scare the enemy.

Kellner's awful ansyn alone would win many fights with a single blow.

"Lie down!" Chief Walter screamed to Kellner, right in his festered ansyn.

Kellner let his 285 pound body fall straight down in the mud. Chief Walter took a step and stood on Kellner's back.

"Good, Kellner. You are with us," cried Chief Walter and stepped on Kellner's neck in order not to dirty his footwear as he gave the order to line up.

Geirwald returned shaken to his home-town, Hallstatt. He was glad he had done so well. Uncle Sigbaum greeted him cheerfully and handed him the holy spear with the tokens. Geirwald had mixed feelings; on one hand it felt good to leave the family and he felt the lust of adventure but on the other hand he also felt a fear of what might happen to him on the raid. Nobody knew if he would come back alive. Perhaps he would lose some limbs. Now there was no turning back. Now he would join the raid on the first new moon after the end of Göje month.

Hilbert, his father, was overjoyed. His son Geirwald had been chosen to become a part of Chief Walter raid, which meant that the burden of feeding the household was relieved.

"Now you need to gain great riches and honour for the family. Do not hesitate in battle or you will lose. Hit first and ask questions later," was the fatherly advice Geirwald got on the way to the gathering stead just north of Hallstatt.

## Chapter 5 - LOVE IN HERREBRO.

Everyone danced in a ring around the stone Stallar, some sun-clockwise and some counter sun-clockwise. The swing was a very important part of the wedding oath. All kinsmen could take part in the swing and those who danced or swung felt that they were at one with the bride and groom and the wedding and the kin. Love was carried away by the break-neck dance and the wedding that seemed awesome to her. The bride sent out rays of happiness and allure. Her brown curls caressed her shoulders as she leaned her head back, gurgling deep love sounds. The bride was moving slowly, teasing, like a maiden landing in her nest. The groom already looked to be in ninth heaven. He rolled his eyes and his chest heaved like a bellows.

Love saw the bride move between the dancers who danced in a ring around the stone-Stallar. The beat of the drums made everyone twitch to the beat. The evening sun highlighted the bride's glistening back.

The bride-settra had anointed the bride's back with special bridal oil. The bride-settra also kept the pace of the moving loving-twain. She put her hand on the bride's lower back and made sure Völse did not fall out of place. Now and then she caressed his noble balls. Love saw how the groom flinched at the touch. Sometimes he was completely gone and twisted back and forth, as if out of mind. The bride leaned over and kissed him.

After nine dances, the Wi-gydja nodded to the bride-settra and the drum-players to eke the beat. The bride-settra poured new bridal oil on the bride's back. The oil seeped down her spine and down under the waistband of the string-kirtle. The bride-settra put the groom's hand back on the bride's lower back and eked the beat. The bride smiled at the groom, who no longer knew what was happening. He was beside himself with horniness. The movements became wilder and wilder. The bride tossed her hair back and forth. The dancers or swingers whirled, two and two, four and four, around the Stallar. Their movement gave Love a better view. The bride-settra held her hand on the back of the bride so she would not fall out of rhythm.

Suddenly the groom took a spasmodic grip on the bride's breasts and squeezed them as he twisted. The grain was emptied. The seed had gone into the womb.

The bride-settra nodded to the Wi-gydja, who in turn lifted her left hand and bronze-lurs roared their highest note over the neighborhood. The drums fell silent. The dancers' jingling bells were still as the dancers stopped to hug, two by two, like twains.

Then it was still for a while. No swinns, Love thought, when all was quiet except the low tones of the bronze-lurs. They also fell silent. For a while, everything stood still as the bride-settra righted the bride so that the seed could drop into the three cup-carvings that were below the bride and groom. The cup-carvings, or bowl pits, formed a triangle and had been made to liken the position of the stars that lit up sky this night, right above the North Star. Everything was both heavenly and earthly.

The bride-settra kneaded Völse and more seed dropped into the cup-carvings. Then she took out the grain from the godsacre, the holy field, and malt, which she got from the Wi-gydja, and sprinkled the blend into the three bowl pits. Then she stirred the blend with a branch from a sacred linden tree.

When the Wi-gydja thought that the blend was ready she nodded again. The bride-settra put her first finger in the blend and tasted it. She licked her finger, smiled and nodded back towards the Wi-gydja.

The bride-settra then grabbed a cup and took up the blend and poured it into a birch-box. The Wi-gydja then lifted her right hand and a man with an ard of wood, a horse and reins came nearer.

All the tribe went across to a field that was next to the Stallar-field. The man with the ard made ready his wooden plough, horse and reins. He got a small holy linden branch from the bride-settra. As was in the bylaws, he would hold the tiwsted twig in his right hand. In order to get good harvest this year, “Ars og Frithur” the man with the ard was to plough the whole futh, or furrow, with a hard-on. Good seed meant good harvest. This bylaw was called Fuccan. The man with the ard was a token for the Sun God Ull fuccan the furrow that is the Earth Goddess Njård (Nerthus). This bylaw was a very old one.

The bride-settra helped the Arderman, the man with the plough, to get a good hard-on. She took Völse in her mouth and soon Völse stood up. Once Völse shone with strength the ploughing ritual could begin. The furrow waited to be teemed.

The horse stepped slowly forward and the Arderman sprinkled the furrow with the linden twig. He dipped the twig in the sheath that was tied to his waist. The bride-settra walked beside the man with the ard and filled his sheath with the holy blend of seeds. The Earth, the goddess Njård or Nerthus, was ploughed easily.

Three furrows were ardered. When the Arderman returned to the Wi-gydja, she gave the linden branch to the bride. The bride and groom sat on their knees at the edge of the field and the Wi-gydja laid her hands on their shoulders.

“Dear newlyweds. In the name of the goddess Vaur, your wedding is now fulfilled. May you live long in happiness and wealth. May our kin enjoy your fruitfulness and may it bring many children into our lives. You are the sign of happiness and success. May togetherness and understanding always be in your home and remember that you have been given different assignments by the wedding- Goddess Vaur. Help each other with these assignments, it is only with long and earnest understanding that our tribe can survive and thrive. Only with long and hard work will your life be good. Men and women are not alike. Vaur have given us different tasks to help each other in life's long journey and it takes great farsightedness and deep insight to think of the other woman or man, but without a deeper understanding, life will not be sweet music. Farsightedness and insight are your wedding vows that the goddess Vaur demands. Say after me,” said the Wi-gydja and looked admonishingly at the bride and groom;

“By the goddess Vaur, farsightedness, and deeper insight will always guide our thoughts in our wedded life.”

The twain spoke the words while holding hands.

“By the goddess Vaur, farsightedness and deeper insight will always guide our thoughts in our wedded life.”

Love found it hard to hold back a surging wave of feelings. The old bylaws filled Love with such awe and she was overcome by their winsomeness. Love did not hold back her tears. She had tears of joy streaming down her cheeks. How nice to cry, to let the tears fall, she thought. Love fully enjoyed the wedding.

She saw that the bride's family also wept. The friends of the wedding twain strew the newlyweds with grain. They knew that some of the seed would grow up right here on Wi-field or godsacre and that this powerful megi of the wedding-seeds would grow, or notch, right here where the wedding twain sat.

Now a beautifully toned mare was led to the groom and he helped the bride up onto the horse and then he swung up onto the horse's back. They dug their heels into the flanks of the horse and it took off at a gallop, or bridal race, as the twain's friends called it. The twain went to a place at the river of Herrebro and then swapped the horse for a sedan. The horse was to take them to the groom's home village later in the evening.

The Horse's saddlebags were filled with gifts the twain had been given. There were holy things, goods of gold, holy rings to put on the Stallar, robes with sacred signs, and of course, food: dried meat, bread, salt, beer and of course honey to make their honeymoon sweet.

The Harg-gothi from Herrebro gathered the others and said:

"My friends, the wedding is now fulfilled. I invite you all to take part in the feast at the riverside.

Love and her friends followed the Harg-gothi and the wedding guests. The bridal twain were carried by eight people in the sedan. The bear who once had offered his life in order to give his skin to this towing walk looked like he was enjoying the feast. Down on the beach, the other kinsmen cooked a great meal.

The bride and groom were carried up to the High seat. Others sat on skins on the ground, except the Gydjas, who sat on stools padded with skins. When everyone had settled down and become full of food, the speeches and the tales began. Some were long and serious, others short and funny. A large dish came in and was given to the twain, who drank the first bowl together - the Bride bowl or Bride skol. Then the bowl went around everybody. It was filled with a lime, cranberry and honey drink. Everyone followed the bylaw of drinking team-around. Everybody was supposed to have a sip. Not too much and not too little; there should be enough for everyone. One had to drink the team-around. It was the lag, the law.

Roar, Maren, Karla, Love, Visten, Ingolf and Rodulf tasted the drink. Once the drink had been passed around all the wedding guests it was time to give the gifts.

The bridal twain's fathers and mothers, the kin chief, the Harg-gothi, The alderme and the Gydjas gave their gifts to the bride and groom, who received them gratefully and put them in the horseback storage bags.

"I want to give them a bit of a bride-settra cloth and a rod with tokens," said Karla to Love.

"Just make sure you still have everything required by the old sidr when we get to Newgrange," said Love admonishingly.

"Don't worry," said Karla, "I've got plenty." Karla got up and walked over to the twain and handed over the cloth. The bride and groom took the gift gratefully and added that their wedding had a special honor from the Rosers' presence.

The food and the bridal ale was brought in. The bridal ale was the best ale Love had ever tasted: well-brewed, tasty, frothy. She felt a tingling feeling in her spine from the booze, which spread slowly over her body. Wedding elk-steak tasted good. The wedding guests said that the elk steak was mouth-watering and talked and enjoyed themselves.

Once the guests had eaten and quenched their thirst, the swing began. The drums were beating. Reed pipes whistled. The bronze-jingles jangled merrily. First the bride entered the dance, alone, as in the old

sidr. She would choose the man she wanted and throw her right leg onto his left shoulder. It was clear who she would choose but how she would do it remained to be seen.

The bride danced, at first calmly and then as the beat eked her movements and hips began to roll like ball joints. She danced around in full turns and then stopped in front of her new husband and let her shoulders, head and hips roll in different directions.

Love did not really understand what she was doing but it looked pretty. The Bride stopped suddenly and stood with her folded arms straight out. The head was moving from left to right and back again, back and forth along the shoulders. For a while the head seemed to be over the left shoulder, in the next moment above the right shoulder. Love had never seen anything like it. How did she do it?

Love did not have time to finish her thoughts because just then the bride put her right leg on the groom's left shoulder. She had chosen him.

A wedding guest led the bridal horse to the bride and groom, who once again climbed onto the horse. This time the storage bags sagged even more from the weight of all the gifts. They dug in their heels again and they set off at a gallop to the groom's home village. They would ride past at least one Stallar and put a golden ring on the holy stone for their future happiness. No one stole the Stallar's golden rings because they were holy. If someone broke this unwritten law, he or she would be punished gruesomely hard, above all by the powers that crafted all the evil of the world.

Soon Love, Karla and the others could not see the bride's flowing hair, which had disappeared along with the groom and the bride race horse.

When the twain began to ride away the drums sounded, swinned. The drum beat signaled the beginning of the swing. The women threw themselves into the dance.

Love, Maren and Karla looked at each other. Love and Karla said at the same time;

"Maren, you first."

Maren just smiled and started dancing. The women from Herrebro were already in full swing. They danced teasingly in front of some men, sometimes just to tease and to then throw their leg on the shoulder of another man. Sometimes the women threw their left leg on the man's right shoulder, which had no meaning but was simply another way of teasing. The dance carried on, louder and louder, more and more sexy. Love saw how the men had problems keeping calm but that they remained seated. She knew from experience that men preferred it this way because the choice was still the girl's and they did not have to rush around and only had to sit and wait and, if needed, pass. The pass must be done in a refined manner, not roughly. The man simply looked away from the teasing girl, so that the flirt was not answered. Of course, some women fully overlooked the fact that the men avoided them with their eyes. Like Maren, for example.

Love saw how Maren danced, tall, thin and strong, in front of a tall man from Herrebro. She swung around him and caught him around his waist with a fast grip. Instead of throwing her leg onto his shoulder, she simply carried him away to the woods. He laughed loudly and smiled to his friends.

Love and Karla looked at each other.

"Now we dance," Love said, adding, "I'll take Roar."

"Sure," said Karla, and winked.

They went out in the Herrebro night. Love did not make any special move but danced straight over to Roar and threw her leg on his left shoulder. He stood up and she took him by the hand and led him towards the woods. Once they were in the woods, Love tripped him. He fell flat on a moss-covered rock with Love over him. Love said, "I knew you'd fall for me," and they laughed and hugged and rolled around so that the moss swirled.

Next ...



## Chapter 6 - LOVE SETS OUT TO NEWGRANGE, IRELAND

Love awoke slowly. The smoke from the fire gave off the familiar smell of home. She turned over and lay on her other side.

She had been chosen to go to the Vanir tribal meeting at Knowth, Woodhenge and Newgrange and today was the day she would leave. They would pick up other Vanir kinsmen on their way down the coast and then travel to Eire land and the holy sites of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth in the Boyne Valley. The Rosers were now building a well-equipped ship that would bring their chosen ones to Newgrange.

A wonderful long-ship with high boards, a rudder and eighteen rowing seats, two times nine. Nine always meant happiness and good luck! The ship sailed smoothly and could be steered easily by smaller crews. Along the sides of the ship one could see many tokens and ornaments: sun crosses, jumping dancers, coils, dish pits, stars, trees, time-ships and fruitfulness-rites. All were in line with the wishes of the goddesses Njård (Nerthus), Vaur, the goddesses of wedding between man and woman, Syn, the goddess that safe-guarded the weak ones, Sol, one of the Disa goddesses, and of course Eira, the goddess of healing. All these goddesses had their tokens carved into the boards of the ship.

When Love came to the boat on the beach, most of the equipment was already ready. Love had had a long briefing with Uncle Hauskuld, who had given her the holy things that she was to leave to the various Vanir tribes on the way. These gifts bestowed friendship for many many years and also worked as a seal of trade between the Rosers and other Vanirs, Anglian and Saxon tribes. The greatest gift would be given at the great Stallar at Newgrange. The mistress bronze-moulder Turid had, along with her father Völund, made a special bronze-lur with a very low sound, or swinn. A bass-lur.

“It reaches the ninth low tone,” said Turid as she handed the bronze-lur to Uncle Hauskuld with a big smile.

“This would make the Danes envious,” Said Uncle Hauskuld and looked carefully over the master-work.

“We are making the other half of the bronze-lur, The Husband,” said Völund.

“The Husband will probably be ready for the next celebration of the Sun,” said Turid and looked at her father, who pulled his beard and nodded. Uncle Hauskuld handled the bronze-lur in awe and looked at Love with a calm gaze.

“Love, this bronze-lur is a master-work. Nobody has ever made such a great bronze-lur that is over 6 feet tall and plays tones that make everybody take part in the bylaws and dances, whether they want to or not. Take care of it. It has required a great deal of strength and willpower to mould this master-lur to have such a low tone,” said Uncle Hauskuld.

Love could barely hold the long bronze-lur. To make it possible for someone to blow it, the bronze-lur was held up by a pair of legs. Love could also hear the jingling of the nine bronze plates that beat against each other and that always gave that wonderful feeling of holiness, a whole.

Williard helped Love to carry the gifts to the boat. Many Rosers had met up to launch the ship. First they loaded the food, drink and equipment on board and then Love boarded, such was the old sidr. The other crew would board the boat after it was launched. With the help of a smart tool, rolling timber, the

ship could be launched into the sea. But before that, the seven-foot Gothi Long-Rolf had spoken. Love was in the ship's bow, with a firm grip on the ship's elk-head that formed the bow's figurehead.

"Love, You have an important task. You are to represent us Rosers, on the way to Newgrange. May happiness and wealth, "Ars og Frithur" always follow you and your ship. This ship is hereby called Noatun. May the Goddesses be with you."

He then took a willow whip and sprinkled holy beer and seed onto the ship's starboard. Many Rosers set the ship rolling and it slid into the sea.

Love gripped the moose-head firmly in order not to fall over once Noatun hit the water's edge. The ship dipped and once it was in the water, it was drawn toward the shore by a pair of ropes and the other crew boarded. They were:

Rodulf, a knowledgeable and scarred sailor who had many trips at sea behind him. He knew everything; rocks, streams, groves and Hargs, with or without Stallars. He was forty years old.

Visten, a soft-spoken, strong, tall sailor who could row for days, months, almost a year without stopping. Thirty years old.

Karla, a Wedding-settra who would help Love with outfits, hair styles, tokens, rings, jewelry, gifts, everything that was needed according to the bylaws. Twenty-three years old.

Ingolf, from the Estonian kingdom, with a rounded ansyn and higgeldy-piggeldy teeth. He had come by boat to the Rosers' land and remained there when the other Estonians went home. Twenty years old.

Maren, strongly built and well over six feet tall. She had a broad and dazzlingly beautiful smile and long, flowing blonde hair. Maren enjoyed shooting with a bow and arrow and could shoot any leaf from an oak, if someone chose a leaf for her to aim for. Twenty-six years old.

This was the crew that boarded the ship from the land of the Rosers. More would board during the trip and there were more pairs of oars. Ullfrid wanted to go but this was not allowed by Uncle Hauskuld or the Hof-gydja Leufsta.

When the crew took their seats behind their oars and took the first stroke of the oars, a roar was heard from a twain of bronze-lurs. The bronze-lurs' blowers were standing on the beach. And so the beach bade farewell to the ship. Love stood long in the stern and saw how Uncle Hauskuld, Long-Rolf, Turid, the High Rede and all the other Rosers disappeared slowly. She felt a lump in her throat when she thought that she might never see them again if anything happened on the road or at home in the village. It was a long time since anything had happened on a ritual towing feast but even so, rumors told of many evil people from the inland to the South who wanted to seize the coasts.

With sadness, Love saw her homeland disappear. She then sat down, took the oars and began to row. Rowing gives frithur, she thought, and rowed. They rowed along the Vaddö Islands and bypassed Yxland. After a few days of rowing they had reached Ekerö, known for its fine oak groves. On the oaks' islands they rested for a day and swapped gifts with the Ekerö Vanirs. Together with the local Gydjas and Gothis, they towed along the causeway down to the water and enjoyed sampling the wild boar meat grilled in their aw.

Roar, from the island Ekerö, boarded the ship. He quickly became familiar with the Roser crew since he was an ace at telling stories and fairy tales; funny stories and sagas, with more or less true content, but they were entertaining and this was important during the many, many hours of rowing.

The Rosers carried on through the system of lakes that made up the fairway. Roar knew all the sounds and tongues of land like his own fingertips and the ship glided in a stately way through lake after lake. Ahead was the Stallar of Hov. The Rosers stopped and had supper. Everybody enjoyed the surroundings. The next day they continued through the channels to the big lake and followed the coast past the new Kaupingen in Bråviken, a renowned trading place.

Lit beacons led them right into the gap of Bråviken. Mountains reared up to greet them. The arrival of the Rosers was keenly awaited; the people of Herrebro had worked for a long time to be ready for this very moment. The trip to Ing's land was made only once every nine years. On the other hand the Angles and Saxons came for a visit in between. Now they could hear the sharp roar of a bronze-lur of Bråviken. "She was standing on the mountain and playing over the sound" was sung by the people of Herrebro for the Woman from Bergsund. She let the notes fly over the strait so the ship was greeted with music. Once they arrived they were met by a large gathering, which welcomed the Rosers heartily.

Before this holy time, many Herrebro villagers had traveled from smaller islands with small boats. They followed Noatun ashore.

Love could see a narrow strait and to the left sat stone-carvers who carved out that which had been read in the sky. The visit came at exactly when it should. The sun began to touch the end of the landscape and Noatun, the ship of the Rosers, was ordered to rest on its oars to get right in the line of sight so that this holy day could be silhouetted against the sun. Everything had to be in order so that the carving would be right: the sun's position, the tally, the ship's position in relation to the sun and the stars. When one of the Gydjorna suddenly found out that one of the rowers was missing, words flew back and forth. Then the number of days would not fit, which would insult the Goddesses. One of the Herrebro oarsmen had to swim out to the ship to take the place of the missing rower. It was planned that another Vanir, a rower, would come on board at Hov Stallar, but nobody had come. The Gydjas counted the number of rowers and compared this with the number of days. Everything seemed right and they beckoned to the stone carvers to carry on with their work. Everything was calculated to the last carving. The people of Herrebro were renowned stone-carvers, among the most skilled and apt in their care to get everything right: the Sun God Ull, the day, the time of the day, who would act, jumpers, ships and ships' positions. The Herrebro-carvers were known for their skills throughout the Norse, Vanir and Anglian-Saxon world.

Love wondered how it could be that the ship had such a special significance. Why did Noatun mean so much?

Why were the ships of such mighty importance? Perhaps it was to do with their power or their link with the sea, perhaps with the ability to travel, or perhaps that the ship joined knowledge with power that they stood out so much in the stone-carvings. Of course they always scored time but now it was so important to be in the right place. She stopped her thoughts at the idea of knowledge. The ship was a way for knowledge to be moved. The people who travelled on the ship brought knowledge to other tribes who could use what they learned and nobody and nothing could stop the free flow of knowledge traveling over the sea. The ship meant unstoppable power and untamed freedom.

She awoke from this daydream when Rodulf gave her a light push in the back because it was time for her to get off the ship and step onto the beach, where the Herrebro Harg-gothi, clad in a bearskin, stretched out his hands in the air and let all his fingers glow in the sun. He had all his fingers remaining and thus was a real gothi.

He signed to Love to stand up so that her body stood out in the sunlight on the boat. He gave a new sign. Visten raised his hand, holding an ornate bronze axe. The axe was heavy, very heavy. The blade

itself weighed over 60 stones. The handle, also of bronze, was equipped with forty jingling bells. The bells could be heard ringing over the straits. The moment seemed to last forever. Twenty-seven people took part in the sidr. They were scattered along the rocks to fulfill each task, whether they were dedicated to the goddesses or to the measurement itself.

Love felt her hug grow in strength. What luck to be a part of this and to be in the sun. Now the stone-carvers worked eagerly. Sand, stone and water swirled. If a writer wrote something wrongly it would bring bad luck. Sometimes one carved or wrote only a line in order to finish the carving later. When the master-carver or master-writer nodded to the Harg-gothi in the bearskin, he waved his hand and a pair of swimmers swam out to bring the ship silently to the beach again. After that, Love returned to the beach and the dancing began along the cliffs and outcrops. A slow dance, or swing, which, like the snake Nidhögg or the river Vergelmer, slithered away over the new signs and tokens and images that were added during the day. The dance would end with a swing for the Goddesses so they would allow the holy carvings.

“Now, my friends, we shall go up the river to the feast site so that you can take part in our feast as the sidr bids,” said the Harg-gothi Hazelroot and led the Rosers towards the feast. Once they arrived, the Rosers lined up on one side and the people from Herrebro on the other to hand over ritual gifts to each other. They sat down cross-legged and the sidr could begin. The Harg-gothi handed over a couple of hazelnut necklaces and nine whiners as a sign of friendship between the Rosers and the Herrebro-people. Love handed over a small, carved Rod of red granite with a sun cross, a time-ship and various carvings.

“Welcome to Herrebro,” the Harg-gothi said. He wore a hazelnut necklace. “How's your mother's brother, Hauskuld?” he asked.

“He's doing well but many moons have passed and he doesn't want to travel far,” answered Love.

“It pleases me that he's fine. We have many memories together. We have travelled together on many ritual travels around our world. He is probably the very best teller/counter of the sun and the moon and the stars and day. But I feel those times are over. Now let us enjoy the freshly felled elk that we have cooked for today's meal. This elk gave its meat to us for us to strengthen his hug, so goes the old sidr,” the Harg-gothi Hazelroot said as his thoughts wandered. He shrugged and carried on, “we also have a wedding. The bride and groom's clans look forward to having you as guests,” the Harg-gothi said as elk meat and ale were carried out.

The smell of fried elk made the nostrils widen. The crew had not tasted fried moose in a long time. Ingolf and Visten rolled their eyes in happiness. Ingolf showed the crowd a thanksgiving-dance in awe of the elk. Maren was delighted. They made sure not to offend the elk. If they did, the elk could disappear altogether. Whole tribes had starved for a long time simply because they did not worship the elk hug.

“If you hurt the woods, you, I and all others will suffer,” Rodulf said and took a big bite of the elk steak. “Roar, you are a master-teller of stories. Now let the words flow freely.”

“There are large barrels full of ale, enough to quench any thirst and to make any tongue slip. Your renown has reached us here in Herrebro so we want to hear,” the Harg-gothi said and laid out many bear skins.

“Of course,” Roar answered, “now you have allowed free drink. I will tell about the Danes’ Hof-gydja and what happened in the past Tunglet of Kyndel, The moon in Göje month six weeks after Midwinter.”

Roar told and told. Everybody laughed. Some choked with laughter and fell off the log where they were sitting. Roar had the wonderful skill of saying words in the right way at the right time.

Ingolf did not rise after having fallen back - the ale was not only healthy but also strong. They gnawed at the last bits of the elk steak.

A message came from the wedding clan that now was the time for the wedding of the bride and groom. All the Rosers except Roar and Ingolf, who slept for a long time, went with the runner to the beach where the clans had gathered to witness the wedding and bed-leading, following the old sidr. The Harggothi and the bride's mother offered the Rosers high-seats on the bride's side.

Love could see how two ships neared each other from opposite sides: one ship with the bride, with her bride-settra and friends and one ship with the groom and his crew.

The two ships met and glided slowly past each other, almost touching. Gifts were given from boat to boat. Then the groom stepped over to the bride and the bridal ship headed towards the land. On the shore, six horn players waited and five people whined with awesome whiners. The whining sound, or swinn, was heard from far away. The people who had something that rattled shook these things in time with the horns.

Two Wi-gydjas brought the twain up to the Stone-stallar, which was right on the beach. A tall Harggydja was standing in front of the Stallar. She would wed the bride and groom. The Wi-gydja had straight, blonde hair and was dressed in yellow cloth. Around her arms she wore winsome rings. The bride was beautifully smeared with red-ochra and her wedding lace kirtle was stringed by the bride-settra, who aptly checked that the bride's long curly brown hair did not fall out of place. The bride also had shells and a bag of bridal things on a band around her waist.

The groom wore a hat of brown crocheted cloth. On the back of his jacket was a wedding sign from the Whitlycke woven in yellow. The sign was spread over the groom's broad shoulders so that it was clearly visible. Around the Stallar stepped and swung nine women with leg warmers and dance sticks smeared with fragrant oils. The blonde Wi-gydja began talking about natural cycles and how everything is repeated, that everything dies and is reborn and that this is the meaning of life. The betrothal, which was read in time as in the old sidr, was followed by the feast. That the twain were fastened to each other, to be assured by the wedding and then sealed with bed-leading was the old sidr by which the people in Herrebro and the Vanirs since old long syne always have wed their wedding twains.

The bride and groom stood in front of the Wi-gydja and behind her stood a Gothi with the large, heavy and ornately carved wedding axe. To the right the woman from Bergsund led the bronze-lur-players. They were eighteen people strong. The Wi-gydja carried on and told the twain about their duty to have children, in tune with all the trees, shrubs, animals, people, sun, moon and heavens, and to care for and feed their children. After each wording the whiners whined and all sang the wedding song.

Love saw the delight of the wedding friends. Magnificent, she thought. A real wedding. She would also like to get wed someday. Karla carefully examined everything in the bride and groom's outfits. Everything had a vital place and it was important to remember how they were and how they looked. Karla knew her work and showed Love many details that she had not seen at first but after Karla pointed them out she remembered why the sign or token sat in a certain way.

The Wi-gydja had now come to the wedding act as the twain sat down and had laid their hands on the rough edge of the wedding axe. The Wi-gydja now asked the bride and groom then if they still stood by their betrothal to love and care for each other and love each other in hardship and need. Both the bride and groom betrothed to love and care. First the bride and then the groom gave a small speech in which they betrothed to stay together. Then the Wi-gydja gave a sign to the bride and groom to stand up and she took the wedding ring of gold that usually lay on the stallar and held it straight out.

“Vaur, Goddess of wedding. The ring is your token of foreverness. The ring signifies the world’s rebirth that happens over and over again, the ground for all life on earth. Goddess Vaur, bless the ring and the wedding twain. Let Your power and strength always follow the twain on their walk along all life’s roads,” said the Wi-gydja with a strong and steady voice, so that the words flew over the river and around the meadows.

Then she gave the ring to the groom and the bride, who put their hands on the golden ring. The Wi-gydja then told the holy words to the bride and the groom, who repeated them. The nine oath witnesses sealed the words by telling them. The Gothi with the wedding axe put the axe down on the ground again with the edge upwards. The bride and groom sat back on their knees and put their hands on the edge of the wedding axe. The Wi-gydja let the whiners whine and blessed the twain as she put her hand on top of their hands. Bronze-lurs sounded. There was a time of stillness.

“This wedding we besale by singing the song which, since long ago, has always been sung at the weddings of our tribe,” said the Wi-gydja and lifted her hand to the choir, who began singing. The other guests also sang the song. The bride-settra tied a willow rope around the legs of the twain. She and the women friends of the bride had twined a very fine rope of willow and now she put it on. The bride-settra tied the willow just beneath the knee. This was a sign that the twain could walk together in the same pace, to the same beat. The twain now walked to the Stallar. The Wi-gydja said that now remained only one thing before their wedding could be fulfilled along with the old sidr and that was the bed-leading. All the friends and guests, led by the Wi-Gydja, who was followed closely by the bride and groom and flanked by the bronze-lur-players and the whiners, went towards a large Stallar on a small hill sloping right as seen from the wedding place. The twain walked at the same pace. The willow was whole. The dancers swung around the Stallar three times. The Stallar was three feet high and nine feet long. On the Stallar lay a bearskin. Three drums began slowly but surely to whip the beat and the dancers/swingers began to sway slowly. The whiners whined in the background. Two reed pipes played high notes. Now and then the bronze-lurs sounded. The Gothi with the wedding axe stood behind the Stallar, next to the Wi-gydja. The singers and other guests stood as an outer ring outside the dancers. First, the bride-settra took off the willow and put it on the top of the Stallar. The Bride-settra took the hat and the coat from the groom and loosened his tunic. She took his hand and led him to the Stallar. The bride-settra laid him on his back on the Stallar. After that, the bride-settra went to the bride and took off her kirtle. Then she led the bride to the Stallar. The drums eked a beat. The whiners swung the whiners even faster. The dancers swung more wildly. The snail-oil smeared off onto the guests, who got hit by either red, yellow or brown spots. And the guests loved it.

The bride-settra brought up the bride on the Stallar and sat her astride over the groom. At the same time the bride-settra helped the bride to loosen the lace skirt cords. Now the bride was naked.

When the bride slowly sank down towards the Völse of the groom the bride-settra took a little oil in her right hand, and smeared the Mornir of the bride. Love saw the bride flinch at the touch. With the left hand the bride-settra made Völse stand up. The song and the sounds grew, to the cries of the guests that came ever closer. The jingling bells tied to the leg-warmers of the dancers tinkled raunchily in the growing night.

When the bride-settra had smeared the Mornir of the bride, the Gothi lifted the wedding axe and the roar of the bronze-lurs echoed across the plains. The Wi-gydja sat down and let her ten fingers touch the earth. She nodded. When the bride-settra saw that the Wi-gydja nodded, she put her right hand on the bride's buttocks and led her slowly down to the groom's Völse. With her left hand she gripped the Völse to steer it. When the bride sank, the singers raised the tone and guests cheered. The dance went on. The bride-settra gathered the seed from the groom and the bride and blended it with the seed in the sheath. This holy blend was to be spread over the fields to give good harvest, “Ars og frithur”, a good year-yield and peace. The drums were drumming.

Love was happy. She loved this.

Love thought that the twain looked so good and so happy.

Next ...

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## Chapter 7 - GEIRWALD MARCHES TOWARDS STRAUBINGEN

Dawn was already breaking when the small army gathered. Hradbart, Kriegerdorfer, Kellner and the other thirty-four selected men stood before Chief Walter, ready to march. They did not have to wait long for the order. The men mounted what horses were there and the group started to move.

Geirwald took with him a bad feeling in his stomach. He turned around time and again to get one last look at his home.

“Do not turn around. Look ahead. Otherwise you’ll stumble and that’s bad luck for us all,” said Hradbart sternly to Geirwald.

Geirwald fell hastily into rhythm and moved on. Somewhere he had a hunch that this pillage and plunder would not end happily. After a few hours' march he felt pain in his legs and feet. The leather straps chafed.

Far away in the group he heard Kellner’s bellowing laugh. They walked in silence for hours until, finally, they camped under the open sky without food. They had not marched as far as Chief Walter had expected and thus not reached their agreed supply site. Geirwald was unaware of his hunger because he was so tired. He spread his cloak and fell asleep immediately.

He woke up when Kaisper kicked him in the bottom.

“Stand up. It’s time to march, you lazy dullwit!” Kaisper shouted, red in the ansyn.

Kaisper served as Chief Walter’s superintendent. He was stout and barely five feet tall, with broad, powerful shoulders. He was also very hairy and was known by the men as “the sheep”, not only because of his hairy body, but also because his thinking was like that of a goat.

Geirwald shook himself awake as Kaisper carried on his harsh kicking to jumpstart the rest of the army.

Slowly, the small army came to its feet and the march began again. Chief Walter had realized that they had to hurry to arrive at the supply site. They went a further three days without food. They found water in a small river and filled their water vessels.

At last they reached a village outside Straubingen. The villagers had awaited their coming and they were brought to a longhouse. In the village, they would stock up on supplies for the march northwards. Chief Walter had chosen the village because it gave the best price for supplies. In Hallstatt and the surrounding area, prices had already gone up so much that it was not worth storing for raids.

Geirwald felt pain in his feet, calves and thighs. He was not used to walking this far. His left foot had also become sore where the edge of the sole of his shoe had cut in. Pus oozed from the sore.

“Hahahaha!” Kriegerdorfer laughed when he saw Geirwald’s trouble.

“Yes, that’s what happens when you bring newcomers. You seem to be a frail type,” he continued. “Pour this on,” he said, giving Geirwald an ill-smelling yellow liquid. Geirwald took it reluctantly and poured it onto the wound.

“That's it, pour it all on there and it’s sure to get better,” said Kriegerdorfer and went away.



In Straubingen, the Chief Stickelork had died. Chief Walter got this bad news. It was bad because he had agreed to buy supplies from Chief Stickelork. Chief Walter was, however, well received by Chief Stickelork's eldest son, Staubgötler, who had said that his father's arrangements still held and that they wanted Chief Walter to be at the burial ritual.

It was clear that it was a great honor to take part in the funeral ritual of a chief from Straubingen. Chief Walter seemed to have calmed down after good contact with Staubgötler. He ordered his men to line up in two rows in awe of the dead Chief of Straubingen.

Chief Walter came to the village's High Rede, where they sat in a longhouse. They sat down to go through the details for the burning ritual. The Chief Walter would have liked to talk business but he did not think it was a good time. The Rede was made up of older aldermen who had worked in the village for a long time. The aldermen knew the new rules and the new traditions. There were twelve of them.

The son, Staubgötler, seemed determined and knew what would be done according to the Asatru-tradition. First they would make a sacrifice to Wotan, then the ritual of burning the dead body would be carried out according to tradition. One of the dead Chief's many wives or maids was to be strangled and put on the fire along with her dead husband.

Chief Walter shuddered when he heard about the wife-burning. He did not agree with it but it looked like he could not say no. Staubgötler began to talk about how he had devoted a third of his father's belongings to making clothes and a third to "Nabid", the feast which takes place during the actual burning of the body. In reality, Staubgötler put off a much smaller sum for death clothes and Nabid. There was no need to waste too many belongings at a burial. Otherwise it would be hard for Staubgötler to carry on doing business. But the asatru tradition divided heritage into three parts; one third went to the family, one third one would make the dead man's clothes and the other third would go to the burial feast.

The Chief Stickelork's body had been washed and his hair combed. His eyes and mouth had been closed and he had been placed on a bed of straw, where he had waited for ten days. The pyre had been prepared and a five-foot tall wooden stand had been built. The corpse would be laid on the wooden stand, underneath which was a large supply of wood and burnable stuff. They had also begun making chief Stickelork's death clothes. Staubgötler said that he had wanted a male offering in his father's honor and to honor Wotan. The Rede hesitated: offering men was not the usual tradition. But the son insisted and demanded that a food thief would be offered. The Rede did not like that the thief's sentence would be altered. It might annoy the gods. But Staubgötler would undoubtedly become chief after his father and it was no good for the Rede to make an enemy of the future chief. In order not to run over the Rede, Staubgötler made a compromise: both of the offerings would be allowed to enjoy a cup of happiness. And so the Rede allowed the doing.

After the Rede had allowed the offerings, Staubgötler went ahead and asked in front of everyone whether Chief Walter wanted to attend the wife as part off the ritual. Staubgötler stared with his brown eyes at Chief Walter. Chief Walter nodded lamely and shivered. What a horrible glory, he thought. He knew he would not be able to get hard and without death fertilization he would be dishonoured. It was also against his own burial rules but just now he had to put them aside. He was on someone else's land. He had to think of something. He thought for a while.

"I wish to bring someone else," he said quietly to the Rede.

The oldest men of the Rede nodded, allowing this. They knew why. Staubgötler accepted the proposal and then gave orders to his warriors to bring the thief and then stood the warriors, with full war

equipment, in two rows. Chief Walter took the opportunity to call in the man who happened to be standing outside closest to the tent, who happened to be Geirwald. Geirwald did not understand but Chief Walter told him to keep quiet and stay by his side and wait for the next order. The thief was dragged in front of Staubgötler and laid at his feet. He was meagerly built with hollow cheekbones. He had dark brown matted hair and only a dirty grey linen covered his body.

Staubgötler, tall and dark with a sharp chin and broad shoulders, took his sword decorated with signs of deers and put the tip against the man's chest.

“Oh Wotan, oh glorious god of war, give us change and happiness and may all welfare follow my father Stickelork on his journey to your heaven. Oh Wotan, You are the greatest god of all. No one can compete with you. You are the greatest of all. You rule over everything. All kingdoms are yours and the power and the glory forever. There should be only one god. Wotan. The greatest of all. We will all go to your heaven, oh Wotan, your heaven.

“Wotan, You are the wisest God of all. Now follow my father into your heaven. So that you may receive my father in a dignified manner I offer the life of this man to you, Wotan. For Your glory,” Staubgötler ended, exhilarated by his own overblown speech.

Meanwhile, two soldiers filled the offender with a drink. At first he resisted but after receiving a few powerful blows to the kidneys he gave in and swallowed the entire drink.

The offender drank a lot. Geirwald watched events from ten to twelve feet away.

Chief Walter had stood his men in a death parade behind Staubgötler's own ranks in awe of the deceased chieftain Stickelork. The offender's gaze became dull and bland. The soldiers took him to the wooden gallows, where they hung him up. They tied his hands to the crossbar.

His head hung forward. The band also settled his feet. Two priests took five hens and cut their necks and the blood was sprinkled on the hanged thief.

Five men wearing full warrior dress sang:

“Wotan, Wotan, Wotan, Wotan, Wotan, Wotan, Wotan, Wotan, Wotan, Wotan, Wotan, Wotan, Wotan.”

Staubgötler, who held both the sacred and the secular power, had now received the death mantle over his shoulders and walked with a firm step towards the block placed behind the wooden gallows. The back of the death mantle was decorated with five skulls. The Priests stopped swinging the necked hens. Blood ran along the thief's chest and thighs. He hardly seemed to realize what was happening.

Staubgötler got up onto the block and reached up to the thief's neck. He put a rope with two loops around the thief's neck and then threw the ends to the two priests. One went to the south and one to the north. When the priests had taken up all the slack of the strangling rope, they waited for the green light from Staubgötler. The warriors beat their shields with their swords.

“Why don't they chop off his head?” Geirwald whispered to Chief Walter.

“Because he's a sacrifice to Wotan. The victim should not be executed as a prisoner of war. It would bring bad luck.

To keep him from exposing his ignorance even more, Geirwald asked no more questions. A single god was something new to Geirwald. In Hallstatt they worshiped many gods, amongst them Wotan, Mars

and Cernunnos. Geirwald had even heard of the goddesses. But that was a long time ago and there weren't many who worshiped the goddesses, maybe one or two.

Here in Straubingen, Wotan's devotees seemed to have taken the lead and they seemed very combative. They did not want to hear of any other god. There would only be one. No idolatry was allowed. Geirwald turned to ask a Straubingen man, who stood behind him in the third row, what sin the thief had done.

"To all of you, the priests say that he has stolen food. But I know it's because he has worshiped other gods. With us that is a sin," answered the man.

The sound of the swordbeating became more and more deafening and Geirwald went back to his place next to Chief Walter. Feelings were whipped up and all were waiting for signs from Staubgötler, who looked around. He seemed to enjoy his newfound position of power. His father had been weak and frail. Staubgötler had ruled for long time without a chieftain title. Now he was about to get the title. He took the branch with which the priests had sprinkled chicken blood on the man on the gallows. Staubgötler lifted it and strutted so everyone could catch a glimpse of it, even the women at the back. The women were told to cover their faces so as not to annoy the great god.

Staubgötler brought down the branch to his chest and held it with both hands. He then stopped the Warriors beating on their shields. There was a deadly silence. It was so quiet that when he broke the branch it sounded like a tree trunk had cracked. There was a murmur from the gathered crowd when the two priests took strangle-rope and pulled with all their power in two directions, north and south.

I should crack the fertility goddesses like I have cracked this branch, thought Staubgötler and smiled victoriously.

The man on the gallows winced and grimaced horribly for a few moments and then let his head fall limply forwards.

"Oh, Wotan, receive our sacrifice. Take him to your realm of death, Hel, where only you, Wotan, rules, You and nobody else. God be praised. Praise, be to God," cried the slightly taller of the priests.

One of the warriors rushed forward and plunged his sword into side of the man. He did not move. At a new signal from Staubgötler, the swords began to strike the shields.

Geirwald felt sick. He felt small beads of sweat falling on his forehead. In a long row the warriors marched to the village, with the priests at the lead. The hanged man hung.

In the middle of the troops went Staubgötler with Chief Walter in tow. Chief Walter called Geirwald to join him, whilst the other warriors returned to the camp. Geirwald did not understand why but he would soon become aware. The whole group was approaching a large tent that was set over the burial fire so that it covered the whole wooden frame.

A few warriors stayed outside. Staubgötler went in first. Another three men from the Rede went in and sat on the lamb-skins that were laid out all around the tent. The tall dark priest also went in and immediately began to pray, prayers that were impossible to understand.

In the middle was a large wooden bed with a tower in each corner. The bed was crammed with lambskins. After the Rede and the Chief Walter sat down in the tent, Staubgötler went into another tent where his father's female slaves and wives had gathered. They sang lamentations over the dead. They

fell silent when Staubgötler came into the tent. He stood, legs apart, in front of them. The seven maids cowered.

“Who wants to follow my father to heaven?” Staubgötler asked briefly but firmly. Two elderly women had come into the tent: the death angels. They took care of the wife-burning. Everything was still. Finally, a slender woman raised her hand and said with a shaky voice:

“I want to follow my master to heaven.”

Everyone looked at her. She was small in stature, dark with sharp features and a well-defined chin, dark eyebrows and green eyes. Her straight, dark brown hair draped her shoulders.

“Come, Sofiq, and follow these two women,” Staubgötler said and walked out of the tent.

The death angels brought the slender woman into a small tent. They undressed her and told her to lie down on a skin rug. They washed her from head to toe. One woman began massaging her shoulders and prepared a drink, which she gave Sofiq. Sofiq drank the strong drink that was in the birch box. It tasted bitter and the slender woman shivered all over. She calmed down, however, as the strong, dark angel of death carried on kneading her arms and legs. As she worked through Sofiq’s body, the second angel of death began to dress her in a dress of fine cloth from across the mountains from the field called Po. At the bottom was an edging of shining linen.

The dress reached her ankles. It was very low-cut. A section covering the back could be blocked or removed with laces running from the neck to the lower back, leaving a four inch gap between the bits of cloth.

The death angels said that both the ritual and the dress came from the south. However, the drink was of Celtic origin. Sofiq nodded meekly. She became dizzy from the drink and the death angels hastened on to finish working on fitting her headdress. On her head they put an ornate, gleaming metal ring. They took her arms and led her out of the tent and to another tent, where she stayed to have intercourse with the tent’s master.

Meanwhile, the death angels went back to the high tent and prepared Stickelork’s body. They took off the clothes he had died in. He had slept for ten days but did not smell. The colour of his skin had changed and become much darker. They put him in pants, trousers, boots, a qurtaq and a cardigan with gold buttons. On his head they put a cap of fur. They sat him on a cushion and supported him with pillows so that he could attend one last performance.

Then came the warriors with some of his chosen weapons and laid them beside the supported Stickelork. They also brought in two cows, which they cut into pieces and laid under the wooden stand of the pyre. Then they came with a rooster and a hen, which they killed and threw in the same place.

The death angels went back to the tent where they had left Sofiq. When she left the tent, she said,

“Say to your master this I have done out of love for him.”

It was the afternoon. The warriors had made a frame that resembled a doorframe. They held the frame up. Then the death angels brought Sofiq to the warriors, who lifted her up so that her feet were on their palms and she was so high that she was higher than the frame.

“Look there, I can see my father and my mother,” said Sofiq elatedly.

They lifted her down only to lift her up again.

“Look there. I can see all my dead relatives seated,” said Sofiq.

They set her down on the ground only to lift her up over the frame.

“Look. I can see my master seated in Paradise and Paradise is beautiful and green and with him are men and boys. He calls me. Let me go to him,” said Sofiq.

Then they handed her a hen, which she necked and threw through the frame. The soldiers picked up the chicken and threw it under the pyre’s wooden stand.

The death angels brought her to the high tent. There, she took off her bracelets and gave them to the death angels. Then she took off her ankle rings and gave them to death angels. They gave her more of the Nabid drink. She sang over the cup, drained it and began to speak.

Geirwald realized she was bidding farewell to her friends. She was handed another cup that was made of glass. She took it and went on with the song. She was becoming increasingly dizzy, Geirwald thought. Who wouldn’t be? He wondered.

She put her head between the tent and the pyre’s wooden stand. The frail angel of death took hold of her head and Sofiq went into the tent. The dark angel of death brought Sofiq to the wooden bed. Staubgötter sat on a stool in front of the bed next to his dead father, whose head had fallen to the left. He did not look very interested, somewhat absent.

The death angels performed a ritual dance and sang a song in a five-tone scale. Around the bed sat the three men from the Rede, the Chief Walter and Geirwald. After they finished singing, the thinner angel of death snatched hold of the back lacing and the other pulled down Sofiq’s dress. The maid fell but the strong death angel grabbed her arm and held her steady. The second angel of death began to rub her naked body with white flour. She then took the oil and soaked Sofiq’s futh.

Then they laid her on the bed and took pieces of cloth and tied her hands to the upper bed gables and her legs in the lower bed gables.

The frail angel of death left the tent and told the warriors that it was time to hit their shields with their swords. They walked around the tent. An almost deafening fuss began as about twenty battle-clad warriors struck with their swords on their shields. The dark angel of death went to the oldest of the Rede and took him to a spot in front of the bed. She helped him to get hard. Then she stood the next one in front of bed head. Then came the turn of Chief Walter. She stood him by the cross gable and started helping him, too, but without success. Chief Walter looked embarrassed.

The frail angel of death helped the oldest to enter the bound maid. She flinched at the touch. Geirwald saw her gaze became more glassy.

The oldest man pushed deeply. He crouched down to reach as far as possible. It wasn’t working for Chief Walter, which he had known from the beginning. He had known that it would not work. The shield-beating, all the men, the dead man’s ansyn, the pressure, everything overwhelmed him. He withdrew from the dark angel of death’s mouth. She looked at him in surprise.

Chief Walter dragged forward Geirwald and stood him in front of the dark angel of death. Geirwald was already thrilled. The dark angel of death smiled and patted him gently on the thigh. The oldest man moved faster and his breathing could be heard more strongly. Then his eyes bulged and he stopped moving. The tied thrall-woman Sofiq moved her futh slightly and turned her head. The second eldest climbed Sofiq and began knead her buttocks with his hands. He used her buttocks as handles and

pushed violently as his breathing increased. He heaved himself over her. The overwhelming sound of the shields was deafening and it felt like he was floating, Geirwald thought. He found it difficult to realize what was happening. The second eldest man pounded his dick against the maid's buttocks. He paused and she twitched in her bindings. The frail angel of death gave Sofiq drinks that she drank in large gulps.

The dark angel of death took Geirwald by the hand and led him to the bed after Staubgötler nodded.

The second oldest withdrew to the head of the bed to regain his place. On the way there he stumbled on Stickelork's legs and bumped into the dead man so that his fur cap fell off, his chin sank down and he put his head in the futh oil.

Geirwald felt quite weak in the knees. The swords are still throbbed violently against the shields. He climbed up on the bed and saw the frail rear of the thrall-woman move back and forth. Everyone was waiting. Everyone demanded action, except for Chief Walter, who was extremely happy to get rid of his duty. Geirwald did not hesitate. He went down on his knees and leaned forward. He met no resistance when he penetrated her. She was already soaking wet. After a few thrusts, Geirwald began to move back and forth at a furious pace. He felt outside himself. He noticed that he had lost it. He could no longer control himself. He did not know what he was doing. His vision disappeared.

Geirwald felt his seed spread into Sofiq's body. He came back to his senses.

The dark angel of death brought Geirwald back to Chief Walter's side and then pointed to Sofiq's left arm.

Then the oldest and his friend pulled Chief Stickelork up from the floor. The Futh-oil ran along his darkened cheek and got stuck in his beard. They laid him beside the maid Sofiq. One eye had been opened by the fall in oil drum and now he stared straight up with one eye. The priest was saying prayers.

The death angels turned to Sofiq and loosened her bindings. They told Chief Walter and Geirwald to grab her arms. The death angels took her ankles. Sofiq did not move. She seemed completely absent after having emptied the last cup.

The oldest and the second oldest put a rope around the maid's neck. The third man, who had until then been seated, moved in front of Sofiq and entered her body. The Priest mumbled prayers.

The death angels shouted excitedly and pulled her legs. The oldest and the next oldest tugged the rope while a third man picked up a dagger, which he ran between her ribs.

The slender maid's head jerked and fell loosely backwards.

Geirwald felt the way Sofiq clutched his arm. He vomited there and then. Chief Stickelork tumbled out of bed because of the third man's sudden movements.

When everything had calmed down, the death angels began to dress the maid in the fine dress. Staubgötler, who had dragged his one-eyed staring father back up onto the bed, ordered everyone to leave the tent immediately.

They marched out and lined up in front of the waiting crowd. The angels of death gave the green light to take away the tent. The warriors did so very quickly. Now everybody could see the former Chief Stickelork lying on the pyre with the maid at his side.

Staubgötler, the Rede and the Chief Walter sat in front of the pyre's end. The rest of the family had already settled on the right hand side of the fire. On the left sat the village's men. The women remained in the background.

A priest, small in stature and with grey hair, neared the fire. It was Stickelork's brother. The brother called to Wotan and stretched his hands toward the heavens as he went back and forth. He paused and made a sweeping movement. The warriors stopped and remained in their seats. The priest clasped his hands and knelt. After a moment of prayer, he arose. He took out a couple of bits of wood, which he threw into the air. The bits of wood fell down onto a cloth that he had laid on the ground. He watched carefully how the bits of wood fell and interpreted Wotan's will, which appeared through the way the wood lay.

"Now," he shouted, "Wotan wants to receive our chieftain Stickelork. No time is more appropriate thereto." He took off his priest's gown, took a bit of wood and set fire to it.

So he went backwards with his back to fire, facing the village's men, with the burning bit of wood in one hand and hiding his naked buttocks with the other hand. He walked backwards towards the fire that was prepared for firing. By throwing the smaller bits of wood in the air the priest had found out the direction of the wind.

With high steps, the priest came near to the bonfire. He paused, without looking towards the fire, which would bring bad luck for both the priest and the village and Stickelork's burning and travel to the next life. Slowly, slowly, he let the burnable bit of wood fall backwards into the pyre's wooden stand.

Geirwald thought for a while that the priest's arm would go out of joint. He had never seen such a movement before. The dry leaves quickly took fire and the fire spread quickly, Geirwald soon heard the creaking and crackling when the spruce wood caught fire. The priest waited a few moments and then went straight towards the village's men without turning around. The men took all the bits of wood that were left and set fire to the end of them. They then threw the burning bits of wood onto the pyre. It was their farewell to their fiery chief. The crowd stood silent and watched the fire burn the wooden stand, the bonfire, the engraved gifts, their chief Stickelork and his maidservant Sofiq, who had also served as his lover. A strong and heavy wind blew and thus the flames grew stronger.

Suddenly, a bang came from the fire and a puff of smoke appeared. The priest jumped up and ran forward, joining his hands. He bellowed:

"Wotan, Wotan, now take chief Stickelork's soul! My only and dearest brother's soul. Oh Wotan, receive it. Take care of it. Wotan, You are the highest god. You rule over all living things. You are omnipotent. Let the chief Stickelork's soul rest in your heavenly kingdom," the priest declaimed and clasped his hands together. Everyone gathered was also their knees and clasped their hands, reaching up to the sky. The puff of smoke was a sacred sign. Chief Stickelork would be well received by Wotan in his heaven. The priest cursed the earth with all its misery and blessed the heaven and the chief Stickelork's trip to the next life.

All those gathered stayed for a long time and watched the flames burn on the bonfire until only ashes remained. In an extremely solemn procession, Staubgötler and his people marched to the village. Now followed the mourning and grief work.

The sacred ashes were gathered after the fire had gone out. The women were to dress in black and smear their ansyns with the ashes.

Once back in the village, Chief Walter talked to Staubgötler. Staubgötler was pleased with the day's processions and approved the contracts his father had previously promised, to ensure that chiefs Walter's men were given supplies for two moons at a low cost.

Chief Walter announced that he intended to march at dawn. He wanted to go further north as soon as possible. Staubgötler nodded in agreement and gave orders to a couple of men to get the supplies to the Chief Walters warriors.

When they left at dawn, Staubgötler took Chief Walter's hand to say goodbye.

"Walter, it's been a pleasure to have you here. I value your part in the ritual of my father's death highly. For this I am grateful to you. Then it was lucky that you brought Geirwald with you instead of Kellner. If Kellner had joined, the maid would have died of fright," he said, and laughed aloud.

Chief Walter smiled sheepishly, shook hands with Staubgötler and left the tent. Kriegerdorfer, Kellner and Hradbart were about to load the horses with supplies when Chief Walter arrived.

"Load as quickly as possible. I want to leave as quickly as possible," said Chief Walter heatedly.

"So it will be," said Kriegerdorfer and increased the pace. So did Hradbart. Kellner moved at the same speed as before. Only to keep him from bursting his boils he said, and laughed. Kaisper stood by but did nothing because he knew it would not be worthwhile.

Kellner had jokingly promised him a kiss if Kaisper argued. How he would interpret it Kaisper did not know but he was disgusted by the idea and so remained far away from Kellner.

When the loading of the horses was done, the group were ready to march. Chief Walter wanted to go northwards. He wanted to go to the land of the Angles. He dreamed about the golden rings lying on open Stallars in the trees, on high mountains or in meadows. He could not understand why the Vanirs did not steal the golden rings, but that was the Vanir's headache.

He feared the forebodings. They had already encountered one and that was Stickelork's death. It was of course solved this time, but still. Bad luck was around the corner. And unfortunately it was the worst a warrior chieftain could encounter.

So far, the raid had coped without much luck. His men had been well supplied thanks to the burial rituals. But still, something felt wrong.

The group marched forward through the woods. The forest became lighter the further north they came. The Spruce woods thinned out. Chief Walter wanted to reach Tyr's woods, to Tyingwald, then find the River Rhine, and with its help lead group to the land of the Angles. Along the river were the chiefs with whom he had agreed to get supplies.

Geirwald walked on. The smelly liquid had helped and the wound healed quickly. He felt dazed by the events of the nights and days before.

Next ...

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## Chapter 8 - LOVE LEAVES HERREBRO

The day after the wedding, they put the boats back to sea and began the trip southwards. Stroke by stroke they rowed out of the bay of Brå. They rounded the outer islets of the land of Vikbo and carried on southwards. They came into the Gryt archipelago, the garden of skerries. Every one of its wonderful islands glittered in the morning heat haze. How wonderful it was to glide slowly through the islands and see how the seagulls and sea eagles flew at different heights with different aims. A large group of seals were lapping up the sun. Love suggested that they go ashore and camp on the largest of the Gryt Islands. A strong agreement was heard from the rowers. They headed towards the beach and Love stood at the bow and lifted her left hand with her fingers spread as a friendly token to the land, to the gnomes, to the little people and to "the small men under the ground" that lived there and owned the beach.

Once at the beach, they tied the boat and started to make camp. Ingolf, Visten and Maren went off to gather food whilst Karla, Love and Roar built a shelter and an oven. Rodulf, being the skipper, took care of the boat. Karla soaked and warmed bark to avoid the birch bark vessels becoming cracked. Her fast fingers treated the bark deftly and soon she had made a dozen vessels, some for making food in and some for drinking from.

Love made a fire. She warmed some poles over the fire. The thin poles became easier to build with if they were heated. She then built a pole structure. She took clay mixed with half as much sand, with which she built the oven walls. Also, Roar had found rough strings of linen, which Love worked into the clay so that the oven would not crack. On the back she made a hole for smoke to escape. The oven looked like a peaked hat with an opening of ten inches.

Maren and Ingolf found reeds, or Hreods as they called them then. They cut the reeds and brought them back to the camp. The reeds' rootstocks were sweet and high in starch. They cooked the tastiest of the rootstocks.

They went further inland and found both dropwort and silverweed. Maren scraped clean a couple of dropwort roots. Some she put in her mouth and some she gave to Ingolf. Ingolf whistled with happiness when he found a large patch of bistort.

"Maren, taste the buds, they taste like hazelnuts," said Ingolf. "Wait, give me the bag. I will bring the roots. There will be an awesome meal here on the half island out here on the archipelago. Look at the big roots, they taste sweet too. Oh wow. There are so many!" said the elated Ingolf to Maren.

They went further and Maren found some arum.

"Ingolf, how long will we stay here on the island?" asked Maren.

"Not so long. Why?" answered Ingolf.

"The arum nuts must be cooked for a long time or soaked for many days to remove the poison. Then they can be processed to get yeast," explained Maren.

"Take enough for a few days. I don't know. We'll see," said Ingolf briskly.

"There's a lot of smartweed growing here. And look there! Sorrel. Sorrel will be good if we get some small fish," said Maren.

“Don’t forget to take away the stem of the leaves to get the best flavour,” said Ingolf knowledgeably and carried on.

“Target, that tastes almost like spinach. We can put together a whole meal,” said Maren.

On the way home they found many hazelnuts. They had already filled the two linen bags they had brought with them. There were so many hazelnuts that Ingolf and Maren had to carry them in their clothing. Hazelnuts would taste good together with the dried bread they had brought from the people of Herrebro. The bread was half cut on the upper side to help break it into smaller bits.

Visten had reached a patch of butterwort, sundew and sorrel. They scraped this to make a very thick sorrel milk. On the way back to camp he found both thyme and saltweed, which pleased him because the food would taste better. They had salt with them but it was better to save the supplies until they really needed it. One never knew.

Love and Karla helped to build the hut. The hut was a basic oval shape, about twenty feet long and 12 feet wide and supported by thirteen pillars, one pole for each moon-month. The rods were each ten feet long and were bent toward the middle of the hut and fastened with withes and rawhide-thongs to shelter the inside.

Love and Karla intertwined thinner hazel branches to give the hut more strength. Visten had found fresh reed, with which he covered the hut’s roof and walls. He tied the reeds with bendable hazel sticks. Love stretched the rawhide under the roof, on the inside. The fireplace stood to the left outside the hut. The hut was quick to build and if it started raining or blowing it would give good shelter.

Karla and Roar had an exchange about whether they should build a food store. Roar thought that there might be some curious or hungry large animals on the island. It would be enough to store the gathered foods in the hut.

Visten had been fishing and caught perch, pike cod, herring, salmon and bream. Once ashore, he had rinsed the fish and added the sorrel that Ingolf and Maren had found. Then he made a fish package wrapped in leaves. He poked chives, thyme and saltweed into the package to add to the taste. Visten made sure the package was shut tight so the mud would not get in and spoil the taste.

Ingolf and Maren made a hole in the ground, about two feet deep and two feet wide. Visten made a fire using a bit of flint he always carried. Maren found some suitable stones and put them on the fire. When the fire had been burning for a while, she raked out the heated stones and put them on top of the fish package. Then she covered the package with earth and a new layer of rocks. On this new rock layer she roasted the hazelnuts. The meal of roots from the bridal bread and the reed-stems she put in the same place. The target leaves she wrapped around some stones and then wrapped bulrush-leaves around them and covered the whole thing with soil so that the food would cook. They made a special cooking pit for the arum nuts, which they would cook for a lot longer than the rest of the food. Afterwards they lay down to rest. The food in cooking pit could cook there for a long time without being overcooked, so it did not matter when they woke up.

Karla rushed around, shouting. She was tired of people sleeping and she was also hungry. Visten and Maren woke up and opened the cooking pit. The food tasted wonderful.

“There’s nothing like roasted hazelnuts,” said Rodulf and grabbed a handful of nuts.

“You’re quite right. But salmon with sorrel, chives and saltweed is also mouthwatering,” said Love.

“It’s good to be here. Could there be a more awesome place between earth and heaven?” asked Visten and smiled so that everyone saw his white teeth shine.

“I’ve made sorrel milk. Do you want to taste?” asked Ingolf.

“It will taste great,” answered Rodulf and took the vessel from Ingolf.

They ate while they boiled the drinking water and heated the sorrel or teart milk. They enjoyed the food and savoured the tastes. When everyone had eaten and was full, Roar began to tell stories. This time the stories were about how water flows through the earth to the sea and is then taken up by the clouds. The clouds water the barrows and mountains. The water then slides down to the ground to continue in foreverness.

He called the story *The world's water jug*, a kenning for the god Heimdal, and the water was Heimdal’s soul or hug that ran, flew and vanished to make life.

Everyone liked his cunning tales and in the meantime Visten had made a reed pipe, which he began to play. Maren turned around and took out the drum. Karla took out two hazelnut rattles and gave one to Love.

Roar was already rattling a hazelnut rattle. He sang. Roar knew many long songs.

Some songs were about the wonderful world of animals and how mankind owe them worship and how good we feel when we take on their hug, that is assume a new harbor, or ham. Other songs were about laws. He knew the laws through songs and quoths. Roar had a great feeling for rhythm and beat and the lyrical value of the words themselves. Everything fell into place in time with the music and the Rosers learned the laws with the help of the songsmith.

It was cosy to blend business with pleasure, thought Love when she heard Roar’s law songs. The fire crackled and they curled up in front of the fire with their backs against the timbers that marked the fireplace from the outside.

They were all lying in a pile and just smiling. Everyone felt togetherness. No battles.

Everything was quiet. Calm. The evening was warm. Wonderfully warm as it used to be.

The island's landscape gave from the sounds from the animals in the woods. A woodpecker with two toes tapped almost the same beat as Roar’s law song.

Roar quothed his song together with the woodpecker and everyone laughed.

Some fell asleep by the campfire and the others entered the hut.

Next ...

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## **Chapter 9 - GEIRWALD MEETS THE BERSERKERS AND THE WOLFSKINNERS**

They travelled northwards along the Rhine. Step by step, mile by mile, they marched to the north to win plunder and awe. Whilst camping at a bend in the river, they met a frightened man who had just come right into the camp and thrown himself in front of their feet by the campfire.

He shouted that the Chatters' northern allies, the Berserkers, were in the woods nearby and that the time had come to die.

"Everyone will die !!!!!" cried the terrified man. "Nobody can compete in strength with the Chatters or the Berserkers."

The frightened man was covered in muck, hollow-eyed and dressed in a ragged tunic, a snow belt and a pair of torn gloves. He threw himself down and tore at the soil with his nails. He stuffed the earth in his mouth out of sheer despair and a complete lack of control.

"I've seen them. I've seen fate. I've seen death. The Berserkers are going to kill everyone on this Earth. The only ones worse are those from Chatters Islands. They all worship Wotan and they hate weakness.

The Berserkers were wearing shirts of bearskin. They have promised Wotan never to sleep!" shouted the man as he brushed a lock of black hair from his forehead so that his face became blackened with earth.

Chief Walter was worried by this new knowledge. He did not like to that there were berserkers in the surrounding woods. Whether he could trust the earth-smearred man or not he did not know, but not taking security measures could punish him and the tribe.

Kellner wanted to kill the man immediately. "He might taste good," he said, smiling unfathomably.

Chief Walter took the man aside. He was familiar with the Chatters from what he had heard whilst in Hallstatt. Chatters are notorious for their banditry and are capable of anything. They had emerged as a lonely raid led by an outlawed chief, who had started looting everything he could. All too quickly, these lawless men had spread and had come to the north, where they were called Berserkers.

The terrified man with the broken gloves talked about the Chatters and the Hariers. A Chatter who reached adulthood let his hair and beard grow as a token of manhood. Only after he had killed his first enemy was he allowed to cut his hair and shave his beard. Then he could count himself as a genuine Chatter and could count on support from the motherland and his parents. Most wore necklaces of bone that could not be removed until an opponent had been sent to death.

"They have no home, no fields, no allotments, no friends to care about," said the scared man.

"They make a living from serving rich tribal leaders, who send them to kill those who have not paid their taxes. They waste the wealth of others that they seem to despise. They also hate the assets they have, because it makes these fighters un-free. Everything, every good or ware that a Chatter or Berserker owns, makes him vulnerable.

That is the way they think" said the filthy, tunic-clad man and smiled in despair.

Chief Walter thought that it was not only the Berserkers that thought that way. The more you have, the more you have to take care of. He thought about all the things that bound him to his deed. Goods bring trouble both for the poor and the rich. But even so, no clan can live without goods or food.

Chief Walter's thinking was broken by the frightened man, who carried on telling them about the Harriers, who painted their shields black so as not to be visible in the night when, under cover of darkness, they attacked like a ghostly horde of warriors that spread death and evil.

"Ha ha ha!" laughed Kriegerdorfer, who now stood beside Chief Walter. "It must be blue-men from Blue-land," he carried on, grinning.

Chief Walter knew of these warriors, who were specially chosen and had undergone special rites to rise in rank in order to become one of those who served the wealthy, paying tribal leaders.

These bands of bandits had become more common as more people had been pushed out of their tribes and more or less forced into this lawless living, where death was ever present. But this was not surprising when the number of men had risen and risen due to the new plough, which could give much more food than the hack-axe that the women used. The power had shifted from the women to the men. Before, the women brought in three quarters of the food. Now, food production had doubled and doubled again due to the metal plough. It was a total change, thought Chief Walter.

Chief Walter was torn from his thoughts when the frightened man fell down at his feet. Chief Walter told Kriegerdorfer to put a skin over the man and then called Geirwald, Hradbart, Kaisper and the other warriors.

"Mine friends. We have a threat nearby. Here in the woods are Chatters and Berserkers. That is not the only thing I want to say. On the way to the land of honey and golden rings there will be many robbers who will threaten us. Such as the Chuders, who kill outright without question. They, like the other hunting groups, worship Wotan. Wut, meaning rage and fury, characterises Wotan's warlike side and the Enhärjars, Wotan's dead warriors in Valhalla, are images of the Berserkers and the Ulvhednar, or Wolfskinners. Wotan can change form and assume an animal's shape as well as the animal's power and soul. Obtaining the bear's strength or wolf's smartness gives tremendous power and victory in every fight. I know there are many similar gangs around," Chief Walter carried on, "such as the fearsome Maruts in the great land beyond the great river and Rome, where gangs of Hippi Soranis hunt those poor kneeling and trembling Romans.

We should be wary of the Stalo; Chuders from the east who kill anything in their way. But it will be a while before we encounter them."

Chief Walter saw that the frightened man had come to life and asked him where the Berserkers were.

"Half a day's quick march away," replied the man, terrified.

"In which way?" asked Chief Walter.

"That way," said the now even more frightened man, pointing northeastwards.

"I understand. We need to get moving urgently," said Chief Walter.

"Are they on the march?" asked Chief Walter.

"Yes, this way. By the river. They will carry out their rites by the river," hissed the terrified man.

- Kriegerdorfer! Order a march now,” commanded Chief Walter.

The whole army came quickly to its feet and began to march along the shore of the river.

At dawn they came across some rowing boats that had been left by the riverside. Chief Walter pondered the situation for a while and then gave orders that those who know how to swim and had no horse would board the rowing boats to get down to the river quickly. The others would follow Kaisper’s and Kriegerdorfer’s leadership and go by horse to a predetermined location, namely at Irminsul, the great Saxon cult rode on the Lyneburger heath.

Chief Walter did not want to split his army into two halves but now he wanted more than anything else to escape the Berserkers and the Chatters. A fight against such skilled warriors would end in a complete defeat for the Chief’s troops and bring disawe to his name. Using rowing boats, they could move quickly downstream on the Rhine, towards the coast.

After repeating again where they would meet, fifteen men boarded the boats and headed down the river. Using the oars they got up good speed and rushed to get as far as they could. They travelled half a day on the river and Geirwald began to think that life was quite pleasant. It was easier to row than to go on foot and he felt that they made good progress.

He longed to see the sea. He had never seen the sea. Though many friends and kinsmen had told him about the sea and all its ghosts and monsters, he really wanted to see the sea and feel its soul.

Geirwald looked forward to meeting the spirits, maybe even getting to see the animals that lived in the sea and could be so big, many times bigger and greater than a man.

Chief Walter was worried that the discovery of the theft of the rowing boats would anger a local chief, who would put his men into march. He was sure that the boats did not belong to the Berserkers or the Chatters. The Berserkers hated water and lakes, which they could not control with force. These boats did not belong to the Berserkers but to another tribe. But which one? Chief Walter had already passed Chief Beckerei’s land, so in that respect there was no danger. But to whom belonged the boats? And would the rightful owner seek revenge?

Geirwald and Chief Walter were interrupted in their thinking by Hradbart, who shouted that he had glimpsed smoke. And sure enough there was smoke in the air. Over a half-island further down the river coiled thick black smoke.

They could also catch a glimpse of people moving back and forth in the camp. Chief Walter wondered whether they had already been seen. He did not manage to think much as suddenly they heard a thump as rowing boat became stuck and sat still. The other boats continued.

The boat was stuck but had not sprung a leak. Fear began to spread among the crew. If they did not come loose they would be easy prey for the Berserkers or the Chatters. Already they saw themselves being roasted over an open fire. Then Geirwald jumped into the water. He swam around and got in under the boat. He felt the powerful current took hold of his legs when he stood on the riverbed. He wrenched and twisted and used all the force he had and in the end, with a sharp jerk, the boat was freed. Geirwald fell backwards and ended up under the boat as a deep current took hold of him and pulled him along.

The rowing boats set off. Chief Walter and his men rowed for dear life. Now the Chatters had caught sight of them. Shouts and roars could be heard from the beach. They rowed desperately, as quickly as

they could. Chief Walter felt remorse for Geirwald but in this situation they could only do one thing and that was to row as quickly as they could without hitting any rocks under the surface.

Geirwald gasped when he came above water. He felt that something was stuck to his ankle. He kicked wildly but did not come loose. He dived and found that his foot was stuck in the fork of a tree bough. He was able to crack the bough and return to the water surface. He came up right on the shore under a large bunch of leaves. He peered cautiously towards the Chatters' camp. Were the Chatters coming over to him? Had they discovered that he had fallen off the boat? Would they eat him? Would they cut off his head and make soup from his best body parts? His thoughts raced.

The Chatters seemed not to have noticed him. They stood on the shore and shouted at the rowing boats. When the boats passed the strait one by one, the Chatters and Berserkers showered them with arrows. But the arrows did not hit the boats and when they had rowed out of sight, calm returned to the camp.

Geirwald wondered what to do. He could either go into the woods to find Kriegerdorfer and the others. He would hardly have a chance of catching up with the horses and there was a risk of meeting the Chatters on the road to the campsite. Geirwald decided to lie low. Under cover of darkness he would swim across to the other shore, find a log and float down along the river. Hopefully Chief Walter would wait for him downstream.

From his hiding place, Geirwald could see that the Chatters' and the Berserkers' rituals were taking place. He parted a few boughs in front of him and he could see right into the camp. Geirwald watched as the men stood in a ring and pushed their spears against the ground and uttered terrible cries. They moved in the beat, not sunwise..

They were dressed in skins. The Berserkers wore bearskins and had hoods over their heads. Some of the Chatters had swords hanging from their belts.

It seemed that no one had discovered Geirwald and he could breathe a sigh of relief, at least for now. He put his feet on the small beach, under the dense leaves, which shielded him from view but whilst he could see most of what happened in the Chatters' and Berserkers' camp.

The Chatters and Berserkers carried on with the ritual. The man who looked to be leading the rites gave behest to bring a man into the middle and the Chatters put him on a wooden cross. They tied his hands to the crossbar. Suddenly a dozen Berserkers rushed towards the bound man, uttering the most terrible roar imaginable. Geirwald shuddered. He was already frightened and their bottomless howls did not make things better. Right in front of the man they stopped and lifted their arms towards him. He did not flinch.

The Berserkers rushed back, only to turn a full turn and rush towards the bound man again. They did this for about half an hour, until they threw themselves down on the ground, exhausted.

Again, the Chats started pounding their spears on the slopes around the bound man in the middle. He seemed unmoved. Geirwald wondered if the man had been drugged. Now came seven men, the first of whom appeared to be the leader. All wore rings of bone around their necks and had long hair and a beard. The men in the ring pounded harder with their spears, arched their necks backwards and let a gurgling sound come from their throats. The leader was wearing a skin whose origins Geirwald could not guess. Two of the other men climbed the crossbar and pulled the ropes of the bound man's wrists even tighter. The tied-up man writhed. His ansyn and lips twisted and he snorted.

The Chatterleader, or the leather man - Geirwald could not decide what to call him - smeared the bound man's breast with a white foamy cream. The Leather man took out a sharpened wooden wedge. He took a firm hold on the man's chest muscle and at the same time he pressed the sharpened wooden wedge into the man's breast muscle from the side. The man screamed. He screamed as much as he could. Geirwald got shivers down his spine. The man carried on screaming as the Chatterleader skillfully pushed a blunter bit of wood through the now open chest muscle. Blood ran down the sides of the man, who for some reason seemed to have calmed down somewhat.

The Chatterleader took up the sharpened wooden wedge and drilled it into the second chest muscle, inserting a blunt bit of wood in the same way as last time. The Chatterleader then took two rope-ends and fastened them on the bits of wood that were sticking out from the man's chest muscles. The two men hanging onto the crossbar released the man's hands. He lowered his hands slowly and grimaced in pain.

The spearmen began to roar freely, straight out. Meanwhile, the Chatterleader gave signs to lift the man up in the air with the ropes. Two men took the ropes that were fastened to the bits of wood stuck in his chest muscles. The man did not show any sign of pain when they began to lift him up. Slowly, very slowly, they lifted the man up towards the treetops. He bowed his head back and gurgled. He was more than six feet tall, his well groomed dark brown hair was blowing in the air when he was lifted inch by inch. His arms hung straight down and his legs were slightly bent. The body in the air looked like a half rainbow, thought Geirwald. He had sharp features and a prominent chin. He was strongly built and nearly six and a half foot tall. He was tanned and looked to be no more than 25 years old. Suddenly, four men that Geirwald had not seen before jumped up and began to hit bits of metal against each other. They faked lunging at each other and sometimes they beat on each other's bits of metal. Sometimes they hit, sometimes they missed.

When the lifting was done, the man hung about fifteen feet above the ground. The Chatterleader stepped back and raised his hands and the murmuring and screaming stopped. Only the gurgling from the hanging man was heard. He spoke carefully and long about something that Geirwald could not understand. He then bent forward and picked up a spear lying on the ground in front of him. He raised his spear with both hands and a roar from the whole horde spread over the landscape. The Chatterleader walked around, spear in hand, and met every man's roar by howling into their ansyns.

Then he stopped, looked at the hanging man and murmured chants to the spear. Then the Chatterleader threw the spear straight into the bark of a tree. Then he took out a tape from his harness and tied it around the spear. The spear-men stood once again in a ring and pounded rhythmically with their spears on the ground. A long while passed. The Chatterleader made a floating movement with his left arm and the two lifters slowly began to let the man down by loosening the ropes. Every inch was accompanied by roars and howls from the Chatters and The Berserkers. As he neared the ground the four Berserkers made a litter by holding out their strong arms and sat him down while the Chatterleader freed him and pulled out the pieces of wood. He put more of the frothy white cream on him and gave a sign to put him near the spear at the tree.

The movement in the camp seemed to calm down. Now and then was heard scattered screams. This calmer state seemed to linger into the evening as the sun set.

Two Berserkers appeared. They brought out a number of sounding metallic bits and began smashing them with rocks that they held in their hands. Geirwald remembered what he had learned earlier in the day. The Berserkers and the Chatters hated goods and wares, which bound them and hindered their freedom. Only without goods and wares was one free from the shackles of the earth. Crushing metal



must be a way of showing their hatred for possessions and for an earthly lifestyle. The Chatters and the Berserkers spit on ordinary people's everyday wears, thought Geirwald.

The sun became thinner. Geirwald became more and more tired. He fell asleep under the bushes. Before he fell asleep, he felt joy at still being alive. He must have slept for a while because when he woke up, darkness had fallen. Now I have to go, he thought. It's now or never. He glided silently into the water and swam slowly into the river. Gently, gently, without any sudden movements, he swam to the other bank. From the camp he could hear a murmur and the crackling of fires. Once well over on the other side, he looked for a log or some wood. He swam slowly along the beach and looked up. He wanted to get past the sound and put himself out of reach before he could set a log down into the water. Geirwald continued to swim for a while. After three or four thousand yards he pulled himself up onto the shore to rest. No one had seen him, at least so he thought. He huddled to keep warm. He felt cold.

Geirwald looked around. No good wood nearby. He found a pair of rotten logs but they would be too heavy. Best would be trees that had been newly felled by beavers. Geirwald continued down the shore, where he found a fresh log. A long and strong birch trunk lay right next to the shore. He had only to throw the trunk into the river. Splash, Geirwald went down into the water and lay on top of the log, which carried him easily. He could steer with his hands and arms. He paddled out to the middle of the river and felt how the current grabbed the trunk and took him downstream at a higher and higher speed. Oops, thought Geirwald, this log is floating quickly. He felt that something was waiting in front but what it was he could not say.

He was glad to move quickly because then he would see Chief Walter and the others soon, or at least he hoped. Geirwald watched both river banks to see if there was a burning campfire. He expected that Chief Walter had perhaps given orders that no fires were to be lit. On the other hand, it would take much strength to miss out on food and the fire's warmth. Moreover, Geirwald would be able to see the rowing boats. No, if I were Chief Walter, thought Geirwald, I would let my men and army rest a good bit away from everything to be out of reach of the Chatters and the Berserkers. Geirwald was trying to figure out how long a trip Chief Walter and the men had made. The log swam well and saved his strength. Hunger sang in his stomach but he was happy to have passed the Chatters' and Berserkers' camp.

Geirwald had clung on to the stock throughout the night. It began to dawn. He felt the Megi of the day eke. The morning sun rose slowly in the sky. The river still gave good speed. He thought that its power was increasing. Geirwald heard a faint noise or swinn ahead. He sat up, straddled the log and saw a number of boulders standing in the river. Around the stones, the water was hissing. A waterfall. He realised that he must steer the log towards the shore.

He paddled towards the left shore and felt how the log was not as easily steered as before. The current still gave good speed. Geirwald neared the waterfall and the stones at a higher and higher speed. He was paddling towards the left riverbank but not at the speed he wanted. He decided to swim the 30 feet and rolled off the log, which went down the waterfalls, only to get stuck between two boulders. With great effort, Geirwald managed to get to the riverbank and crept, shaking, up the sloping shore. He saw that the log was still stuck.

Exhausted but happy to be alive, Geirwald crawled up to the bushes that grew just above the grassy slope. He tore some branches from the bushes, made a simple shelter and fell asleep straight away.

"Geirwald, wake up. We have to go," said Kellner and smiled, if he could smile with that face. Geirwald awoke with a jolt.. He thought he had gone to hell. Or worse, that he had woken up and was gazing right into Kellner's ugly ansyn, which smiled - or did it?

“Kellner, Kellner, is that you? How did you find me? Where’s Chief Walter? Is everyone dead?”  
Geirwald hurled questions without waiting for answers.

“Come now, otherwise I will show you my front teeth. You are one of the few that has his front teeth left. If you don t follow me now, they’ll soon be gone. We will regroup. Now!”

Geirwald got quickly to his feet and followed Kellner. They went down to the shore, where one of the rowing boats was waiting. On the way, Kellner told Geirwald that they had got stuck in the waterfall blocks. One boat had broken and they had been forced to carry the others past the waterfall. Chief Walter had given Kellner the last -in- line-boat. He had been waiting for Geirwald and therefore remained hidden in the woods. He knew that he Geirwald would turn up at the waterfall.

They jumped into the boat and punted out onto the river and the river gave good speed.

Next ...

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## Chapter 10 - LOVE VISITS ULLEVI AND NÄRINGE

The Rosers rowed down the coast. They passed Tryserum, Ed and East Ed. Slowly but surely they came further southwards on their trip to Newgrange. They rowed in time with each other and rested on the stroke of the oars so that the ship Noatun moved well. The ship sailed rhythmically and doggedly onwards. Love was enthralled by the archipelago. Terns and gull flew around and she could hear that the birds were playing the love game, the beloved game.

Love told the others that they would soon arrive at Ullevi, one of the sun god Ull's holy places, *vi* meaning holy. Ullevi was 4000 yards southeast of Näringe, one of the mother goddess Njård's holy places. The length between Ull's places and Njård's places was holy, as was the kinship between the Sun and the Earth, like all Ull's and Njård's places in the valley of the lake Mälaren. Love also told them that there was a widely praised Ullevi on the west coast south of Tanum.

Love knew it was around the right time for the holy towing along the causeway.

The year was 2288 and it was the Spring month. The Spring month came after the Grass Month but before the month of May. In the late Spring month, the end of the fertility year was worshiped. The old gods and goddesses were burned in favour of the new. Those with newly grown powers would take on the new year and give it a bountiful harvest, *Ars og fridur* - "Good harvest and peace"

Dead spirits or hugs, gods and goddesses, forefathers and foremothers were called the *Wal*, as in Walpurgis.

When the Wal were burned they gathered to sing songs and enjoy the bonfires and the Wal's ingong to the holy world of the hugs. It is usual to build a so-called bonfire of old rods and sometimes old ships. Using ships was a well spread bylaw across the Baltic Sea in the land of the Estonians. They believed that the ship was a sign of the link between the Sun and the Earth and by burning the old ships, the site was cleaned, ready for new links between the Sun and Earth, meaning that the harvest would be better.

Love and Uncle Hauskuld had calculated that they could take part in the May Day worshipping in Ullevi and Näringe and still have time to reach Newgrange by midsummer. They would even have time to pay a visit to Roskilde for the fiddlers' feast.

They eked their speed to make it to Ullevi in time. Maren and Roar sat at the front of the ship; they were both strong and gave Noatun a strong ride forwards. A night and a day passed. Then Love glimpsed the tokens that made her know they had found the right place.

They steered the bow towards the beach. The Rosers saw how the Ullevi folk came down to meet them. Visten and Maren pulled Noatun up onto the beach and were greeted by the Ullevi folk, who said that they liked the way the Rosers landed on the beach so the small folks were not frightened away.

The Rosers were led up to the place where the feast would take place. A Long Harggydja came towards them on the road and hugged Love.

"You must be the daughter of Leufsta. How awesomely good-looking you are, but then your mother is also very good-looking," said the Harggydjan and smiled as she straightened her long blonde hair and light blue dress suit with swirling patterns along its edges, both at the collar and at the list.

Love thought that the Harggydja still looked young. She looked even younger than her mother Leufsta.

“I’m Solfrid the Harggydja,” she said shortly.

“Oh, I know,” answered Love. “My mother has told me a lot about you and your healing skills,” she carried on.

“Now, mine friends, you should come with us to the feast where we will worship the Yuletide in awe of Ull, linked to the Wal-feasts. You know, I mean, your mother must have told you that we do as we want here in the Ullevi, holding the feast of Yuletide in the Spring months, and so on. But this place is called Ullevi and so the sun god Ull must be praised. That is what we believe in,” said Solfrid and smiled with her whole ansyn.

“We worship in our way and we think that is right,” said Solfrid again and awaited Love’s answer.

“Good. You have my mother’s goodwill,” said Love and smiled back.

When the Rosers came to the site of the feast they saw a huge stone boulder, a token of Ull, who stretched his arms toward the sun. The standing stone was made of grey stone and had been hammered into shape.

Solfrid said that Ull stands in a position so that the sun shines between his hands on the morning of Midsummer Eve.

“Ull can be seen from afar,” she said

“Of course we burn the Wal as well, otherwise the end of the fruitfulness year will not come and the powers will become evil.” Solfrid paused and waved to the Näringe folk, who lined up 1,000 yards away in a southeasterly headway towards the Ull standing stone. The Näringe folk waved back.

Solfrid said that the Näringe folk choose the fairest maiden in the village to be the Earth Goddess Njård and carry her on a Njård litter from Ullevi to Näringe. We in Ullevi choose the most beautiful young man the village can offer to be Ull. During these feasts, Ull and Njård meet and see each other for only a short while in order for allure and yearning to happen. The wedding cult takes place at midsummer. They have to wait until then.

Solfrid ended her story since she saw that everything was almost ready and she told Rosers to sit and enjoy the feast time. The Näringe folk stood still a thousand yards away and waited for the gong, the walk to Näringe. Finally the Harggydja Solfrid behested that feast begin.

Behind the big Ull standing stone, the Ullevi folk slowly lifted a sun wheel with two reels. Four men reeled the sun round with long ropes. The sun wheel whirled upwards without any creaking or cracking: all the reels were smeared with black snail oil. The sun wheel was made of gold and was glimmering. The sun did not fall straight through Ull’s arms but that was not the bylaw because the sun would shine through Ull’s arms on Midsummer Eve. What happened now was only a rehearsal. Slowly but steadily, the worshiped sun wheel passed Ull’s arms and then passed down into the groove so that it sat in Ull’s arms.

Love placed all her carved signs on the sun wheel. She tried to count but lost count at forty-seven. Love guessed Ull’s height to be twelve feet and the width of the sun wheel to be nine feet. She looked at Solfrid, who shone with pride. She wanted to show Leufsta’s daughter what skilled manners they had in Ullevi and Näringe. Solfrid shone like a sunbeam, especially when the sunlight was mirrored from the golden sun wheel on her sun-yellow hair. QIt was quiet when Solfrid loftily brought the gifts to Ull. Hazelnuts, fresh fish, barley flour, honey and dried lime leaves were added to the gifts at Ull’s feet.

Solfrid stood in front of Ull and stretched out her arms. Four young men rushed forward and took hold of Solfrid's hands. They danced and swung nine sun-wise laps around Ull. Solfrid then asked the five young men to stand in a row in front of Ull. Five girls came and pulled the five men into a merry dance around Ull. After three laps, four of the girls helped pull one of the men from the dance. The girls wore rope-skirts made for jumpers, that is the girls and young men who jumped above the stage, which was shaped like a ship, to show the falling stars or the positions of the stars. They turned full turns in the air and landed on their feet. They were the stars. The jumpers wore curved bronze neck rings. They also smeared themselves with snail oil to bring even more lust. From the ankles to their knees, the girls wore rope-leggings.

Then they came back and danced, swung, with the remaining four. The same thing was repeated it. They danced three laps around Ull and then brought the number of young men down to three. When only two men remained the thrill eked.

The wild girls danced in a trance with the two remaining men. Three laps became five laps, became seven. On the ninth lap the girls threw themselves over one man and thus the choice was made. The other man trotted away. But maybe he was happy, for now the five girls began to tickle the chosen man and their greedy hands searched for anything that was worth finding. He sometimes laughed and sometimes choked. Sometimes he had something different in his eyes.

The girls' deft hands touched every part of his body. They wanted to know and show that his Völse and everything else was in good shape.

When the girls had given their approval that he would be fit for bed-leading at the wedding, everybody roared and screamed. The girls took his hands and led him through the village to the gathering place, where the Näringe folk waited. Together with the whole village and the invited Rosers, the Ullevi folk and the Näringe folk met with their chosen Ull. The girls who had chosen him whispered back and forth between themselves. Love wondered what they were saying but the secret had to be kept. Or maybe it was not such a secret - the most important thing was that it seemed to be a secret. Love was calling to mind the first moments when she had whispered with the girls whirling around the Midsummer-pole. Many games, many dances. Love recalled the time with joy. They had had a lot of fun, which was what mattered.

They walked a thousand yards on the causeway and then greeted each other along the old sidr. The Näringe folk, led by a tall man, greeted the Ullevi people. The Ullevi people felt well received. Two Harggydjas lifted two torches towards the Ullevi folk as a greeting sign and the whole gang went on to Näringe.

I could walk The Road to Näringe many times over, thought Love to herself. Wow. So many people have gathered for the yearly feast. I wonder what happens when we get there.

Everyone walked through the woods and over the fields. Drums and Näringe's beloved hollow drumsticks gave an alluring and horny swinn that made people jump, swing and dance. There was joy everywhere. The five jumping girls from Ullevi flitted around and pinched people on the bottom if they were not dancing and swinging with enough pleasure. If a pinch was not enough they became harsher and pulled the kirtle from the woman or man. Once naked they danced and swung much better.

Now and then they brought the young Ull-man near to because the young Njärd-woman so that he could admire her and look at her lewdly. The Njärd-woman smiled alluringly from the Njärd litter. She threw kisses and twisted about, pulled her hair over her forehead and peered out from behind it. It was not only the Ull-man who showed signs of horniness. Many in the group found this year's chosen

Njård-woman really alluring and good-looking. Now and then the Ull-man threw a flower to her. She took the flowers that landed on the litter and kissed them, stuffed them inside her kirtle, took them out, kissed them again and then threw them back to the Ull man.

The sun had waned further. The evening shone lukewarm. The tall man from Näringe showed the way. Now they had come to Näringe Lake. All gathered around the big beacon that the Näringe folk had made. The flames will be twenty feet high, thought Love and swung with her hand as she and the other Rosers lined up with the Ullevi and Näringe folk. All swung, held hands and whirled around the Wal-beacon. The Ullevi folk whirled sun-wise and the Näringe folk un-sun-wise.

After a few laps, Njård stepped into the middle of the dancing ring. There were cheers and hand-claps. When the Njård-litter was in place, the five Ullevi girls rushed in with Ull. They ran around and sang loudly. A jumper jumped up on the shoulders of another and whirled around Njård like a giant. She neared and whispered in Njård's ear.

Njård smiled and looked raunchily at Ull. The third jumper flipped alongside them. The fourth jumper took flight, flew high and landed in the middle of the Njård litter, making it crack. For a while Love thought that the Njård litter would break but it did not.

The Ullevi girl who had landed on the stretcher whispered something in Njård's ear. The fifth Ullevi-jumper speeded and wheeled straight to the stretcher with a mistletoe twig in her mouth. She managed to jump over the stretcher and leave the mistletoe for Njård, who smiled and lifted it over her head, looking alluringly at Ull.

Two wonderfully swinning bronze-lurs were heard over Näringe Lake. They had been put on a hill above the Wal-beacon to give the best sound. The Ullevi jumpers took Ull and the bearers of the Njård litter walked down to the water.

As the bylaws said, they went into the water. The winsome and awesome following slipped into the water and they brought the floating stretcher towards a raft anchored about eighty feet off the beach.

Once there, the strong Swens, that is the bearers of the the Njård litter, lifted Njård onto the raft. The raft had a three-foot torch tied in each of its four corners. The light glimmered on the lake. The torches gave a mythical and meg-awesome feeling, thought Love from where she sat on a rock with the other Rosers and took part in Walpurgis night together with the other Ullevi and Näringe folk.

The lying bronze-lurs blew in full swing. Solfrid took a torch and went up towards the big Walpurghis beacon. "Farewell old goddesses and old gods. Give way to the new. Give way for those coming after you to take over on your behalf. Kinsmen come and kinsmen go. We will walk on this earth for many years, the outcome of life comes from the changes of the year, from the sun God Ull's rays shining on Njård's earth and everything becoming green. The Walpurghis beacon marks the end of fruitfulness year. Midsummer is the beginning of the new fruitfulness year. Every year has its new goddesses and gods. They have to make room for new goddesses and gods in the same way as we burn the old grass to grow the new. So it is, and so it always will be," finished Solfrid and brought a handsome torch to the pyre, which caught fire quickly and the fire spread.

Soon the fire had caught every branch and bit of wood. Love felt the heat of the Walpurghis beacon and enjoyed it. She enjoyed their sea-faring, which had already given many new friends and enriching munins. Now she would be able to tell many tales over many evenings by the fire at home in Roden. She made little quoths about each place to better remind herself of what she had been through.

The dance and swing around the Walpurghis beacon began. The Ullevi kinsmen danced sun-wise and the Näringe folk un-sun-wise. After eighteen laps around the Walpurghis beacon, the women jumpers from Ullevi whirled loose. In the rush, they took the Ull-man and headed for the beach. Sometimes they wheeled and sometimes they flew in somersaults in the air and landed in the water. The fifth jumper moved with the Ull-man in the water. They gathered around him and swam with him out to the raft, where Njård waited. They swam around the raft and the Njård woman gave him one of the flowers that he had thrown to her earlier. He lifted the flower. The crowd on the beach cheered. He put the flower in his mouth and swam with the jumpers towards the beach. Once at the beach, the tall man from Näringe greeted him and gave him a necklace of bear teeth, which was a sign that he might be busy in the village if all went well during Midsummer Eve, a kind of groom gift or before-hand dowry of the young twain so that they would feel so good about each other that they chose to live together forever.

For the Ullevi kins and the Näringe folk, the bylaw was that the man moved to the woman's family. Elsewhere the bylaw was the other way around, thought Love. The feast lasted all night long. They sang and danced. They were singing with many different voices. They liked to sing. They had a long and deep knowledge of singing with other people. They usually sang at all the feasts and also in other lands and villages. The Ullevi folk were broad minded and trained their skills in air leaps and jumps. Some of their skills Love and the Rosers had already seen during the day and the evening.

They know their stuff, thought Love and felt that she was getting tired. She looked around but could not find anywhere to sleep. She got up and walked over to Solfrid to ask where they could sleep. Solfrid said they would soon turn back to the Ullevi town but there were so many who wanted to continue enjoying themselves that it would be hard to find anyone else to come. Solfrid went for a walk and found out who would agree to walk home to Ullevi. Then she took the lead and led Love and the Rosers back to Ullevi, where the Rosers were offered a sleeping place in the nave next to Solfrid. The nave was in the middle of the longhouse. The heated nave gave a safe and snug feeling, thought Love and lay down on the bed of grass. One of Solfrid's girlfriends came up with a bowl of water to quench their night thirst. Visten and Roar had carried up their packing. The Rosers fell asleep quickly. Love fell asleep with a smile on her ansyn. She was delighted to have witnessed an Ull and Njård feast with a walk along the causeway.

On Solfrid's order, the Ullevi kinsmen had sealed and tarred the Noatun ship. They had also made the sun wheels better and oiled the elk head so that water would not dry out Noatun's bow figure. It would bring bad luck if the elk head dried and cracked and the storms could crush Noatun during the Rosers' onward seafaring. Above all, the North Sea was known for awful storms.

The next day the sun was shining and Maren shook Love lightly. It was time to leave. They still had a long way to travel and must use the good weather. Solfrid said that they must stop by the Ale Stones and seal the time measurements. "The view from Ale Stones is astonishing, overwhelming," said Solfrid and gave Love a cloth bag with chosen herbs. "Take this and give them to the Vi-gydja and the Vi-gothi and they will treat you with respect," she added, "and do not forget to send my best greetings to your mother from me."

"No, no, I have quothed twenty six quoths about what we have seen here. My mother will know all," said Love reassuringly. Karla and Rodulf took up the splendid base-bronze-lur and showed it to the Harggydja Solfrid. "The work of the master moulder Turid and her father Völund. Völund has helped but he has grown old and cannot work much longer. Turid has taken over the business and she is doing splendidly," said Rodulf proudly.

“Yes I must say,” said Solfrid in astonishment. “Is it a twain?” she asked curiously.

“Of course,” said Ingolf and gently loosened the cloth that shielded the lur’s husband.

“A wonderful tone swinns over the hills and valleys. You can feel the swinn in your knees. My knees get very weak when I listen to the lowest notes. I cannot play tones that low. Visten plays much better than I can but he is not here. You play instead, Love,” said Rodulf and handed the bronze-lur to Love.

She held the neck of the bronze-lur with her left hand and with her right hand she gripped the narrower part just below the mouthpiece. Rodulf put a wooden strut under the bronze-lur to steady it. Love pursed her lips, filled her lungs with air and let the air gush through the narrow neck of the bronze-lur. A trembling, booming sound spread over the landscape. Solfrid and Rodulf could see how the people turned around on the shore. Love played nine rhythm loops and then wrapped the shielding cloth around the bronze-lur.

“Lovely! What a wonderfully alluring swinn. Turid has created a wonder. I have never heard such low notes before. The goddesses at Newgrange will be happy to be blessed by these bronze-lur tones. A twain of bronze-lurs that may give such low tones really is a gift. It will be hard for the Vigydjas of Newgrange to beat a gift like this,” said Harggydjan Solfrid happily.

“I’m afraid we have to leave now. We have a long way to go and we must not be too late, or the little people might become evil,” said Love. She gently lay down the Bronze-lurs in Noatun’s hull and covered them with the cloth.

Solfrid and Love hugged each other. The Näringe folk and the Ullevi people fought to see who could push Noatun the longest. Some even swam at Noatun’s keel and pushed the boat. The Rosers hardly had to row. Finally, the last Ullevi man let go of Noatun and waved goodbye and they came out of Gudinge Bay. The Rosers rowed.

Rodulf pointed out that on the port side was the Gutars’ island, Gotland.

The Gotlanders had many treasures and were highly skilled at making grooves in rocks and carving rock and teeming the time. “Not to mention of course that they’re the strongest at throwing the Varpe,” said Rodulf. Love thought to herself that at some point in the future, she would travel eastwards to the lands she had heard so much about. Lands carrying in their womb all kinds of monsters, monsters, ghosts, little people and giants. She shivered with eagerness.

Love carried on Rodulf’s story and told the others how they were nearing the lands of Smaland, with the Hult Islands. Hult was the Smalanders’ name for a *Vi*. A Hult could be either a Harg or a Lund but a building was needed to call the holy site a Hof. The Rosers rowed past the village Rössle and the same day they passed the small town Gladhammar. Love did not like the cult hammer, or hammer oath as she preferred to call it. The Hammar-sidr was much too closely linked to the Aesir and Breitgera. Love thought about the word Glad. She liked this word but thought they could have used the stronger word, *kåt* or *kaut* to mean cheerful or happy.

The next day, the Rosers passed the small towns of Strömhult, Bohult and Marsgölehult. From Noatun they could see that a stone henge sometimes surrounded the Hult holy place. The Hults were usually in very wonderful places. Sometimes they were deeply embedded in greenery with good views of the archipelago.

At midday, the Rosers glimpsed other villages like Hökhult, Göljhult and Misterhult. A little later in the day, they caught sight of Gässhult on the port side and Meder on the starboard side. They managed



to get past Släthult before staying overnight at Flathult. There were no people on the nice beach but the Hult was well-kept and tended. Holy stones lay in even lines with a flat stone in the middle. Love told the others to worship as they headed ashore, so the little people would not be angry. Love stood bare-breasted at the in the bow when Noatun glided up onto the beach. They fell asleep straight away. They were tired after much seafaring.

Rodulf roused the crew early the following day. The Rosers left at dawn and carried on with their trip towards Newgrange. "On the starboard side you will find the Island Öland," said Rodulf when Noatun glided along the long island. They could also catch a glimpse of Love's Hult, a Hult named in honour of the Goddess Love and her worship.

"Love is a love Goddess from whom I got my name," said Love, pointing at Love Hult. She wondered whether they should stay for a while but she had a hunch that the Rosers would think it was too nice and that they would be late for Midsummer at Newgrange.

The sun began to rise earlier and earlier and the days grew longer. The Rosers met two small fishing boats. The Småland fishing boats gave the Rosers fresh fish and told them that they would soon pass Ramshult and Skärshult, but they should be wary of the Döderhult, where they could become sick. All this time, the Rosers could see Öland on the starboard side and got a glimpse of Solliden, which lay awesomely on the slope in the sun.

Rodulf pointed out the Karlevi stone after they come through the narrowest part of the Strait of Öland. The Karlevi stone shone in the sun on the coast of Öland. Love asked for a change of course to stay nearer the coast.

On the evening of the third day they reached the small town of Fågelmara and could glimpse the southern tip of Öland. The next day they made their way through the archipelago and stayed overnight in Hörnsvik. "Why do they call the Goddess Härn *Hörn*? Do they mean the goddess of greenery?" wondered Visten.

"Well, everyone has their own way of looking at things and way of spelling the holy words. I heard they call her the Flax Goddess. But it is the same goddess. See how it grows around her Stallar," said Karla and went toward the Hörn-Stallar that lay on a small hill with a nice view of the bay.

"Goddessly, sensually lovesome," said Maren and sighed. She went to the Stallar and stood in the north-south headway, bowing her head. She asked the Goddess Hörn for leave to touch the holy golden Stallar-Ring and lifted the gold ring.

She handed the awesomely golden ring to Love, who put it on her left arm and walked three times around the Stallar. Maren, Visten, Roar, Karla and Rodulf put groats, nuts and roots on the Stallar as gifts to the goddess of greenery.

Only a Gydja or a Gothi had the right to touch the golden rings that were the Stallar. Maren had stepped out of line, even though she had asked for leave by the old sidr. Luckily they were alone. Had someone viewed them then the Rosers would have to live with the shame.

When the gifts were given they sat cross-legged around the Stallar and thought. Love enjoyed the place, the trees, the stone, the birds and the surrounding sea. She felt that she was a part of the crafting of life, of the Stallar, of the sea, of the grass, of the plants. Love felt her power grow within her as the goddess Härn filled her life with Megi, both on the outside and the inside. Love felt a full harmony with the little people and trolls who lived around the Stallar.

Love took off the holy Hörn ring and laid it gently back on the Stallar. The ring glittered in the sunlight. Love took nine steps backwards and lay down in the grass. A day to remember, she thought, and fell asleep. The other Rosers did likewise. They woke up after a night's sleep and climbed on board Noatun to carry on sailing.

Now they left the archipelago and the coast became straight. They rowed southwards at a good speed and with the wind behind them and thus they were helped on their way. Along the coast they saw the high mounds and large dolmens. The Rosers did not stop until they reached the Kivik Barrow. Love had been told by her mother to visit the Kivik Barrow to gather as much knowledge as possible about the barrow, about the Kivik folk's old sidr, their bylaws and about how they measured the sun.

The Kivik people had come thirteen nineteen-year grooves ago. They had come far, far away from the hot lands in the south and still kept their manifold manners. Of course, they learnt some new ways in the north but also kept many of their old bylaws. Some were forgotten but many were still in use.

Love was eager to find out as much as she could to tell her mother. The month was now May and may-bylaws were the most enjoyable and the most thrilling. A lot of people loved to may. To may is to clad holy things with green leaves as a token of the coming summer, to greet the fruitfulness. Now the land, the trees, plants and flowers bloomed and flaunted all their handsomeness. The Maying of the pole or the rod, of the horses, of the Stallar, of the House of worship (Hof), made everything at ease. The Maying was a readying for Midsummer, the big feast. The Rosers could see from far away how the Kivik folk clad their rods, horses and so on with leaves. Everything was a whirl of shrubs and leaves and they barely saw the Rosers step into their village.

"Be greeted," a small, dark-skinned man told Love in a low, thin voice. He had a big black beard. He went on, "I understand that you have travelled far and are tired." He was clad in a full-length blue kirtle adorned with a sun wheel and double axes.

"No, we have rested at Hörns Stallar at Listerlandet and been lucky with the wind and currents," said Ingolf.

"Good," answered the small man, "I am Trefus, the Lunda-Gothi of Kivik. Who are you? Where are you from and where are you going?"

"We are the Rosers from Roden. We are travelling to Newgrange to take part in the Midsummer worship this year. Ars og fridur. I am Love, sworn Vigydya and daughter of the Vigydja Leufsta," replied Love and looked at the small man.

"I have met the Hof-gothi Olaf. What an honour to meet his kin and also a newly-sworn Vigydja," said the man, nodding to Love. He carried on without waiting for an answer from Love or any of the other Rosers. "We have sorrow. Our chief the Lunda-Gothi has just left our world for ever and we are getting ready for a burial walk. We ask you show awe for the dead. I will ensure that you'll be fed. Love, as a Vigyda, I will show you our holy seat. The others will be fed and cared for in the houses over there," he said and pointed at a pair of pole houses with mud walls.

He also gave a three signs to two men who stood outside the pole houses. They understood what to do and nodded back. The Lunda-gothi Trefus and Love walked nearly a mile, about 2500 alns or ells, an elbow length. When they arrived at the Kivik folk's holy barrow, Trefus walked towards the sun. He knelt and raised his hands to the sky. Love also knelt but instead of raising her hands in the air she put her hands on the ground to feel the soil with her fingertips. Love thought that the Lunda-gothi was

breaking the bond to the Earth by stretching his hands instead to the sky but this made her eager to know more and she wondered if people in the South worshiped heaven more than the Earth.

Or maybe only heaven. How could that work? To ignore the Earth - a man without a woman? Only Ull and no Njård? That could not work, thought Love.

Trefus mumbled a number of words that Love did not understand got up and told Love to do the same.

“Love, now we have spoken to the hugs. Now we can go in safely,” he said reassuringly. The Lunda-gothi Trefus and Love walked along a curved stone walkway and down into a large and very well-built barrow. The barrow was high, higher than any Love had seen before. Thrilled, she looked around her.. Inside the barrow sat a stone-carver, who was a working on a stone picture. When the Lunda-gothi Trefus came in, the stone-carver stood up and bowed. He handed a torch to the Lunda-gothi Trefus and then left the barrow.

The Lunda-gothi Trefus said he had heard much about Love’s mother, the Hofgydja Leufsta. “She must be very knowledgeable, with all her knowledge of the stars and of the years, of recording and of stone-carving. How does she keep track of it all?” he asked eagerly.

“My mother has many ways. She uses trays, knots, painted boards, carved stones and so on to keep everything in order. One day all her aids will become mine,” said Love both proudly and sadly at the same time. “My mother is ill with lung sickness and many midsummers have lapsed in her lifetime. She has seen eclipses of both the sun and moon, when she led the carvings from the Stallar. Now she is weak but there is nothing wrong with her Munin or her Hug,” she said withdrawn and restrainedly.

The Lunda-gothi Trefus waited a while and for Love to stop thinking. When Love did not further her thoughts he said, “Now to tell you about our bylaws. First of all, we have horse-baiting. The biggest and strongest stallions are baited against each other in a field to the south of this barrow. Once we have chosen the horse with the most heat, we release him to a few mares in the next field.

“Before the horses get to mate, as says the old sidr, we build a wooden mare. That wooden mare we smear with stench of mares so that the stallion thinks that it is real. When the stud-seed is emptied the Horse-settras gather up the seed in a vessel with two handles. Two horse-settras are needed because they need one hand to hold the seed vessel and the other hand to keep it steady, it gets wild when stallion starts to heat up.

When the stallion has teemed the wooden mare and the seed is in the seed vessel, the horse-settras blend the horse seed with holy water from a holy well a couple of miles away, holy seeds from the godsacre-fuccan bylaw in spring month and ground up mistletoe leaves. They add honey to make it sweet.

The vessel is then taken to our holy Vi-place on a wagon drawn by two mares. It is set up at the end of the thousand ells-long causeway lined with logs. All the village’s women with fewer than four children dress in feather kirtles and line up to go to the feast. The women with more than three children have a higher rank. Around the vessel on the stone-Stallar the folk fiddlers play on lurs, strings and wooden mouth harps. The towing women on the causeway are flanked by men holding heavy wedding-axes and sun wheel signs. On the rocks we have set up rock drills to make carvings,” said the Lunda-gothi Trefus and gave Love a stone drill. The drill measured five feet in height and had a long rope so that it could be swirled back and forth, with sand and water. “We pour sand and water in a small drill hole then twist it back and forth as said in the old fruitfulness sidr. It should be a man and a woman who do the lofty spinning,” said Trefus proudly.

Love answered that the Rosers had the same sidr.

“When the drill begins turning we blow the bronze-lurs and the women in feather kirtles tow along the causeway to the vessel with the holy blend on the stone-Stallar. The women taste of the holy blend, which gives long life and many children. The men in turn stand in two lines in front of two stone-lined wombs, I think you call them mazes or troll-castles. They enter into these, go three times to the middle and then go out again. The bronze-lurs’ swinn is heard the whole time and the heavy double wedding-axes are carried back and forth along the causeway,” said the Lunda-gothi Trefus glady.

Love felt a tingling in her stomach. Her mother had told her about the holy barrow of Kivik. To be shown inside the holiest room of the the holy barrow was magical. The flickering flames of torches lit up the magic walls. She felt the Megi spread in the room, how the carvings came to life, how the holy towing along the causeway went on and on and on.

“Before the Wal-feasts we drill to make a holy fire and light the Walpurghis bonfire with. Our Walpurghis feast is later than other vanirs. We like to keep our old sidr,” said Trefus, albeit somewhat sheepishly. “We also make use of the holy fire-drilling when we light our late Lunda-gothi bonfire,” he said and bent his head.

“These are awesome carvings,” said Love, stunned by the carvings’ fine drafts and the well-worked slabs. “Can I touch them?” She asked

“Of course you can, but do it gently and kneeling.”

Love knelt down and put her hand along the carvings. She felt the fine lines and strokes. She shivered with pleasure to behold the fine carvings. “It will be a pleasure to tell the Hof-gothi Olof and my mother about this. They will listen with great pleasure.”

Love pulled the sea air into her lungs. She thought of Newgrange and what it would be like. She daydreamed about the long towing along the causeway and a many holy tokens.

She had taken a flintstone chosen by Uncle Hauskuld to make drawings of the Newgrange tokens. The Rod flintstones from Roden were easy to work with and Uncle Hauskuld waited with great eagerness to see her drawings when she came home.

Trefus and Love went out of the holy barrow and Trefus led Love back to the camp. They kissed and said goodbye. The next morning Love and the other Rosers had to leave for Newgrange. The ship glided into the at water and the oars rowed in time. After a while Roar threw a fishhook with worms to try his luck while the other rowed. He touched the fishing-line hopefully but no there was no catch. Roar went on to tell quoths and stories to entertain the crew. Suddenly, in the middle of a quoth, Maren bent forward and kissed him, twitching the fishing-line. Roar was speechless. Maren hauled up the fishing –line and found a large cod.

“Roar, you seem to have luck both in fishing and love,” said Visten and smiled broadly.

“I don’t understand why you’re so quiet, you usually have a well-oiled mouth,” said Rodulf to Roar.

Maren hit the cod on the starboard board and took out the hook. She then slit the fish-maw with her flint knife. “Now we sing,” said Roar and stomped a well-known beat. They sang for most of the day and rowed to the beat.

Next ...

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## Chapter 11 - LOVE COMES TO THE ALE STONES

From far away, they could see the Ale Stones on the Kåseberga ridge. The view brought a stunning feeling. The Ale Stones stood powerful and still up on the cliff. The Rosers felt like small ants against the handiwork.

“The Ale Stones give a more stunning gut-feeling than I’d ever dreamt,” said Roar and squinted up along the Kåseberga ridge.

“What you see is only the beginning. You’ll soon understand why they’ve built such a big time gauge here,” said Love and carried on, “*Ale* means holy here in southern Skåne. We say *Al* but they call a holy place or a holy thing *Ale*. *Skåne* comes from the Goddess Skade, the Goddess of winter, who is also part of the Shamanic and the Lapp way of life. Skade stands for an old *sidr* that has come to us from the north. At times this *sidr* had many followers in many places round the Baltic Sea, but mainly in the north.

“But now I’m talking about other things. Back to the Ale Stones. What we can see is one of the Baltic Sea’s largest and most skillfully made timing gauges. There are many of them here. The Ale Stones measure the full moon’s most northern and most southern rise at the Midsummer solstice and its most northern and most southern rise at the Midwinter solstice. I hope that we get to meet a Vigydja or Vigothi who can tell us more about the Ale Stones. They’re astonishing.”

Love ended her speech whilst behesting a more straight course for Noatun. “Within two knuckles starboard is a small harbour. Aim for the harbour,” said Love and Roar righted the rudder.

They went straight towards the small village that had a harbour. It was hard to get the boat right and Roar had to adjust the rudder thrice so as not to hit the shallow grounds or land too quickly. Once they had arrived, they tied Noatun fast and climbed the cliff. When they came up onto the rock they became engulfed by the stunning view. They could see the whole of the Hanö bay and the island of Bornholm.

The Rosers walked, making a triangle shape with Love bare-breasted in the lead. Behind her walked Karla and Maren, also bare-breasted. To walk towards a holy place without giving anything was bad. Often the visitor gave a mother’s breast milk. The bare breasts meant kindness. It could be that there was a child who needed milk and to be able to offer milk would save the child’s life. Thus, the bare breast was a sign of kindness and that these people came as friends.

Roar and Visten went after Maren and Karla, each with a Bronze-lur. Last in line were Ingolf and Rodulf, who went with gifts to put in the middle of the Ale Stones. As the tow neared the holy Ale Stones, they saw a man walking up to the shrine. The Rosers walked towards the middle of the Ale Stones. Slowly and proudly, with Love was standing in the middle, they made a ring by holding hands. Ingolf and Rodulf spread grains, nuts and roots on a small Stallar stone in the middle of the Ale Stones. Ingolf stumbled and nearly knocked out his crooked teeth. Roar thought that Ingolf had so many teeth that it would do no harm if he lost some. Karla told them to be quiet. The Rosers took each other’s hands, closed their eyes and stood still. Suddenly, like magic, the clouds scattered and the sun came out. The sunlight shone strongly. Love thought Sun, Sun, Sun, Ull, Ull, Ull, and the sun peeked. Love thought Njård, Njård, Njård, and the earth seemed to smile and take in the life-giving rays.

The Rosers backed out of the Ale Stones and went to meet the man who came up the slope. The man was bearded and wore a yellow ankle-length kirtle with long sleeves. The kirtle was covered with sun crosses, wheels and four-sided long-boxes. He smiled.

“You must be a Vigydja,” he said, and kept smiling. “Only cunning people with a lot of knowledge show enough awe for this holy place. The Aesir do not show awe for reckoning, the movements of the stars or stone-carving. You have to be born with a gift from the goddesses, you can split the clouds and make Ull shine,” he said. He took Love's hands, brought them together so that their palms pressed against each other and then put his hands on the outside.

“You are to be greeted. What can I do for you?” he asked.

“Firstly, I want you to tell us your name and then I want you to tell us all about the Ale stones. I am Love, a chosen Vigydja and daughter of Leufsta, the Vigydja in Roden land.”

“An awe, a great awe it is to be visited by the Vigydja Leufta's daughter. Your mother is well known for her knowledge and kindness. Hark back, I felt that you were a remarkable woman when I saw how you neared our holy Stallar. My name is Olle from Tuna. My rank is second Vi-gothi of the Holy Ale Stones. All rod-settings and scoring of the sun, the moon and the stars falls to me. I also guard the stone circles of the Ale Stones. The High Rede has chosen to set a new stone but this is very seldom nowadays. If we move closer to the time-stones you will see that a middle line runs straight through the Ale Stones,” said Olle from Tuna and went closer to the time-stones, that is the Ale Stones.

He carried on; “If you stand at the Rudder stone, you can see that the stones split into two halves. My friends, the rudder stone has a height of eleven feet. The northern Bow stone measures eight feet and four inches in height and three and a half feet in width. From the Rudder stone we measure the full moon at its northernmost wane at the winter solstice.

“Stand at the first stone to the right of the Rudder stone and then look along the axis from the the first stone to the thirteenth. The line formed we have marked, or scored as some call it, the full moon's northernmost wane at the midwinter solstice in the year 1221. When counting, we use the year null from the world's first ground groove, in the Huggreifs' shire on the island of Gotland. Ohhhh, they are such good starwatchers on Gotland!

“Let us take the next stone, the second, and view the same stone as last time, that is number twelve. then we have the full moon at its northernmost wane at the winter solstice in the year 1183. Here we have the next stone, the same wane as the full moon, but in the year 1164. The last benchmark in this stone-row, stone number four gives the year 1145, again from the year null, or Huggreifs-null as we call it.

“As you can see, the nineteen-year round comes up all the time except for the first calculation. There were 38 years between them, that is twice nineteen years. The simple reason for this being missed is that the Gydjas and the Gothis were quarrelling about how it could be measured, which ended in no measurement being taken. That's the way it is when people quarrel. It's not wrong for two people to quarrel but the measure still has to be taken. We see the drop as a way to remember the loss from the quarrels. But I will not dwell on fights and quarrels now. Now I am going straight over to Head Stone,” said Olle from Tuna and held up ten fingers in the air so he could tread on the middle ground.

“Here on this stone, you can see the full moon's summer solstice. If we are aiming with the first stone to the right of the Bow stone from the fifteenth stone, we can see the full moon rise at the southernmost midsummer solstice in the year 1240. The next stone gives the year 1202. The third stone gives us the

same year as the stone in the straight line. If we put ourselves to the left of the Bow stone and look along the first stone, we get the full moon rise at the northernmost midsummer solstice in 1213. We'll go as far as five stones until the next nineteen years has passed. That is a full Gotland turn.

Now we go a few steps up to the Stallar Stone, on which you put your gifts. Look now along Stallar stone towards southern Bow stone, you see where the sun went down at the midwinter solstice year 1093. One of the earlier measurements, or scores, as you can also call them. One of the most thrilling measurements was done by my forefathers. It was the question of life or death. To be or not to be. If a whole eclipse of the moon takes place, that really is something. Three moon eclipses in a row with nineteen years intervals is holy. It happened in the years 1058, 1077 and 1096. The moon overshadowing the year 1077 that lasted the longest.

“The first moon eclipse shook my forefathers with fear and they thought that the Moon had become angry and would not come back for more. The moon would never shine on them anymore, a sign that the goddesses did not like them. It was a token that life was over, that they all would die, that the doomsday had come. If the moon left, the sun would also leave.

“Despite all the worries and fear they decided to measure. My forefathers stood at the Rudder stone when the full moon eclipse hit and lasted as far as the southern Stern stone. On the morning of the nineteenth day of Yule-month In the year 1077, the moon was slowly stained blood-red and retook its moon shape only after it went down at sunrise. Few have ever seen such a moon eclipse. One woman, our Queen, saw all three. She built the Ale Stones in their memory.

“Everyone screamed in horror but calmed down when the Moon came back. They understood that the goddesses were not evil but wanted to talk to us. A year with a full moon eclipse meant they could measure all the Moon movements in the future. Each measurement is a holy happening, speaking with the goddesses. All this knowledge has been passed down from Gydja and Gothi to the next line of kinsmen. My bloodline gave 32 kinsmen's lives before I took over the knowledge and the duty to carry on the knowledge of adding and the cunningness of the stars. Knowing the time is the most important. Without knowing the time man becomes lost. Hack-axing to get food needs a knowledge of time.

“The Ale stones' largest stones - the Rudder stone, the Stallar stone, the north and the south Bow stones - were shipped here from a stonemasonry that lay between the villages Gislövshammar and Simrishamn, more than 133 miles away. Shiny grey-white sandstone. Those four stones were the first. In order to maintain knowledge of that remarkable moon eclipse in the year 1077. Mine forefathers have kept building to draw other events in the sky, much like when the Angles built Stonehenge, Woodhenge and Avebury. The smaller stones were taken from Småland. It was hard to get the blocks up onto the 115 feet high sand ridge but with ropes, logs and by widening the road the stones came to stand where are today. Only the Domar Ring in Askeberga in Västergötland with fifty-three boulders can compete in size but the Domar Ring lacks the Stern and Rudder Stones. No, the Ale Stones are the largest and I believe it will remain so,” said Olle from Tuna, almost flustered as if he had spoken too much.

“Yes, yes, I almost forgot,” said Love and took the bag of cloth with chosen plants. “The Cloth bag holds the chosen herbs that I would hand over to you and your Vigydja from the Harggydja Solfrid in Ullevi,” Love said and held out the bag to Olle from Tuna.

“Oh, thank you very much. Did you bring a gift from the Harggydja in Ullevi? How kind and thoughtful! This gift I will recall,” said Olle from Tuna and took four long, carved stones from his bag. “Here, I give you two holy Stone Völses and two Stone Mornirs from Fosie.” Olle from Tuna gave them to Karla, who took the gifts with awe.



“Look how neat they are. Look at the cracks in both of them. The crack runs all the way up the Stone Völse so that the blend of man-seed, woman sap and the best barley Fosite has grown can flow from the Stone Völse into the crack of the Stone Mornir. Here you can still see some old blend that is left. It was used at the Spring Eve many times in Fosite and here. These stones have teemed many women at the Fosite yearly feasts.

Karla looked at the fine, slender stones. She held the Stone Mornir in her hand and let her fingers slide over the stone cunt. It felt so soft, so well-ground, so round. She put her tongue into the crack and tasted the salty taste. She shrugged with happiness and munned the many feasts. Carefully, she put the gifts in her bag.

“How long are you staying? If you stay for Midsummer, I can see that you may attend the Midsummer measurements.”

“Thank you, we would love to stay, but we have vowed to attend the Spring Eve or Imbolg feasts at Knowth, Midsummer feasts at Woodhenge and the birthfeast at Yuletide, Samhan in Newgrange,” Love and smiled.

“Well then, I understand that you have to hurry. A week or three with bad weather and you will not come in time for the Spring Eve or Midsummer. So I will just wish you good luck on your sea-fare and hope that the Sea god Njord watches over you,” said the Vigothi.

They said goodbye, climbed the 900 feet down to the Noatun and rowed out into the waves. They followed the coast to avoid losing their headway. The sun had gone behind the heavy black clouds but the weather stayed fine.

Next ...

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## Chapter 12 - LOVE VISITS THE TOWN OF RODESKILDE

The Rosers left the Ale Stones. Love had gathered a lot of new knowledge to share. She had made munin quoths and carved bits of wood to help her recall. Love now had a twain of small measuring wands, a gift from Olle of Tuna. The measuring wands were nine inches in length and on them were carved signs and hacks to help with measuring. Olle from Tuna had shown Love how she could craft a twain of big measure-wands and set these out to settle the lay of the moon and the sun. Love knew most of what Olle from Tuna had told her but you can never have enough new knowledge and she became transfixed by their measuring skills.

Thinking about the measurements, she did not see that the ship Noatun had come off course. Love was sitting at the rudder. Rodulf shouted to her from the bow.

“Love, now we are off to the land of ice if you carry on this headway. Think of nothing but keeping track of the steering oar,” said Rodulf sharply.

Love begged for forgiveness when she found out her mistake and righted the headway. Then she smiled and said to Rodulf, “That’s better!”

“Well done,” answered Rodulf and smiled back.

They had come far away from the coastline but recalled the coastline carefully to find the right route. Now and then they glimpsed dolmens and other large stone buildings. The land was fruitful and there was plenty of game, even if the woods had made way for field clearing in many places.

Love found the grubbing went a little too fast. Birch and oak woods were cut down to make way for new fields to be ploughed with the new ard, the wooden plough. The ard had become very widespread here amongst the bonders, who furrowed the land. These bonders also moulded bronze and other metals to put on the wooden ard to make it heavier. The metal plough could plough deeper furrows and work faster than the wooden ard and much deeper than the hack-axe.

The bonders were growing crops. The women used the hack-axe to treat the earth. Before they had grown three quarters tribe’s food. The hack-axe was the grounding of the hack-axe culture.

The hack-axe is fighting with the plough, Love thought. The hack-axe will lose. The women will lose, Love brooded. Times are changing. The man and the horse help to pull the plough so that the furrow becomes much bigger and well-fuccaned and the plough reaches further down into the earth, into the womb of the goddess Njård, Nerthus. The hack-axe does not reach so far, sighed Love.

Love pondered her reasoning, how men were now using the plough and the horse to furrow wide fields and so getting more food to everyone in the tribe. But at the same time, we will be more tied to the earth, which will require more work and more people. The man and the horse will get more food and so the woman will gather less food for the tribe. So has it been for a long time here in the land of the Danes.

For us, the women bring most food to the tribe. The men hunt, but usually they do not catch prey. Sometimes they just carry around their arms to show off. But that’s just how it is for us. Women know where the mushrooms, berries and roots are and the pick-axe gives many lovely crops.

Love tried to work out who spent most time gathering food for the Roden tribe. She brooded over the amount of time that women spent finding food. Love found that the men brought in a quarter and the women three quarters, meaning that women had always had a high rank among the Vanirs and also that there were many Goddesses. Love said to herself:

If men begin to take over the food supply to the kin, what will happen to the women's rank and how will it be with the Goddesses? Outright, there will be more man-gods, Love thought. I also wonder if it will touch on the number of Gydjas and Gothis? Now there are more Gydjas than Gothis among the Vanirs.

Perhaps in the future the change would also touch her own rank. The Rosers might choose a Hofgothi instead of a Hofgydja to have the highest rank. Could that really be the fate of our kin? Love asked herself. Would men really do less hunting? Yes, there were also some women who hunted, like Maren, but the women hunters were fewer. Would men do both hunting and farming? Love thought that sounded strange. The earth had always been a woman's chore. But here in the landscape Skåne the change had already taken place. Some already ploughed with a plough rather than with an ard or hacking the land with pick-axe and she knew that in the southernmost bit of the inland and on the other side of the Baltic Sea this change had already taken root. There, they worshiped other Gods. The Asa gods.

Love felt that the fairness between man and woman would change. Women would own fewer and fewer things. Among the Vanirs, everyone owned everything together. There were very few who quarrelled. There were very few rapes, if any. No fights. No battles. In the land on the other side of the Baltic sea, the change was there already. On the other side of the big sea the men already had much more power than the women.

Love did not want a split between men and women. She loved men. What would she do without men? Everything would be so dull! Deep in her hug Love felt that the new lifestyle would change the fairness they had just now.

Fate sways back and forth. Now the vanirs were waning. So it would be. When would fate sway back? asked Love thoughtfully. Well, she said to herself, it will be the next time work and livelihood change fully.

"Now you're going off course again!" shouted Rodulf angrily to Love. He jumped over a couple of thwarts to get aft.

"Aye, aye," Love answered, "I have so many thoughts flying around."

"I can take over the rudder," said Ingolf and looked at her with his big, faithful eyes.

"Sure," said Love, and handed over the rudder to Ingolf. "You know where we should aim. We should round the Skanör at night and in the morning sail over to the land of the Danes. Love saw how Karla's moon-blood flowed down her legs. Karla asked Maren for help and Maren lifted Karla down into the water with her strong arms and also helped Visten and Ingolf to bathe in this way. Love could not say no to a wash either after standing with her bottom against the railing. She felt the lukewarm water refresh her body. Maren's strong arms lifted Love back into the bow. Rodulf said they were rowing past Köpinge. The small town of Köpinge has been a large marketplace for hundreds of years. He kept on talking and said that further up is Örup, one of the farms in Skåne owning the most pigs. He added that the Örup's pigs have the awe of being the tastiest in Skåne, with many travelling many a mile to get an Örup pig at Yuletide.

They kept going at an easy speed and somewhat later they passed the Disa Thing. Love told the others that the Disa Thing they could see had a high place in Skåne and was where the law was carried out. When somebody wanted to sue somebody, the Readan at the Disa Thing would readan what to do.

The Readan of the Thing decided whether the matter was important enough to take up and, if so, who would be heard. The Readan then gathered a Gydja or Gothi and nine oath-witnesses if needed, but perhaps fewer oath witnesses could be used if the deal was less weighty. The task of the oath – witnesses was to retell if the Thing doomed that way. Big buying and selling matters were also dealt with by the Thing.

The Disers guarded over the Disa Thing. The Disers were the fruitfulness goddesses, who wed and allowed the final outcome in weighty matters. Those who sought law guidance at the Disa Thing would give them grouts, nuts, grain, horse seed or his own seed.

The trip carried on and the Rosers passed the High Stone and the small town of Brasakallt . A little later they slipped past the villages of Smygehuk and Stavsten Cape. Ingolf nodded to Love and Love sat down between the benches and righted the bearskin upon which they were sleeping. She gathered her thoughts and saw Karla, Visten and Roar press themselves closer together to keep in the heat, for it had become colder, and to just feel the closeness. Love also liked “piling”, that is when they all lay in a pile. Sometimes it was quiet, sometimes everyone moved. Sometimes it could end up with everyone sleeping with everyone else. This “small pile” seemed to be a lie-still pile.

Love let her thoughts rush. It was so wonderful to think. It was so wonderful to go by boat. They had set up a flat sail, which pushed the boat forwards now that the wind came from behind. Otherwise they had to row. But now the wind was blowing. The night was warm. The evening came. They fared towards the land of the Danes. The land of music and sough. Love felt her eagerness rise. Who would share in the feast in Rodeskilde? Which tribes would be there? She spread the bearskin and stretched out her legs.

Love peered up at the sky. The evening had become night. She could see the stars stand out clearly. Love pointed out the leading stars with Ingolf. In the bow, Roar also amused himself in the bow watching the stars. Love wondered if the stars would speak to them tonight or if they would see a high sign this very night. She peered over the sky and watched broodingly for signs. She saw that Roar was doing the same.

Love enjoyed floating slowly in the boat and let the stars play with her. She knew that the stars watched the Rosers: what they did and what they did not do. Love recalled how her mother had told her how the stars ruled over people's lives: when they were born, when they would die, when their weddings would take place. Leufsta the Hofgydjan had also told Love how people could alter the stars, the sun and the moon by doing the right bylaws and awed rituals at the right time, that is, at times that the sun, moon and stars stated. It could be at Midsummer Eve, at Midwinter Eve or another feast given by the Goddesses.

When the Rosers did these awesome doings and walked in a tow along the holy causeway, they talked with the Goddesses in a holy way and the Goddesses passed on the tidings to the Sun, to the Moon and the Stars, who were actually Goddesses too. Everything under the Earth was holy. The Earth gave food.

The Earth Goddess, Njård, was held in a high rank by the Vanirs and was worshiped glowingly. She stood for all life. Njård made up the very ground of Vanir life. all the bylaws and doings that were intended to talk to with the Goddesses. It was important that the Earth was a part of the whole. The earth, the Rosers and the sky: everything was one whole. So it would be for ever, her mother had said.

Being midway between heaven and earth, being the link between these two Goddesses, was wonderful, thought Love. We, the Rosers are in the Middle Kingdom, not only reaching sideways along the ground but also with height and the depth, from the middle of the Earth to the heavens' midst. And now she, Love, the daughter of the Hofgydja Leufsta, would go to Newgrange to be a part of the most awesome towing along the holy causeway in nineteen years. The Vanirs would be in the middle of everything. At the very high tide when all the Vanir tribes walked or towed along the holy causeway at Newgrange and they spoke with the Goddesses, then the Vanirs were in the fathomed middle. In the middle of the world.

Love got the same feeling now when she slid slowly along the Skåne coast on the ship Noatun's floor. Love felt that she shared everything with the world around her. All were part of her and she was a part of everything. The night blackened more. Ingolf stood at the helm. Maren and Roar took each other's hands and crawled out onto the foredeck, which measured four feet and was good enough to curl up on.

They slowly took off each other clothes. They dripped each garment on Noatun's bow. Roar sat astride around the wooden elk's head which was at the front of Noatun's bow head. Maren sat between the elk-head and Roar. She straddled Roar's legs and slowly caressed his Völse to the strength she wanted. When his Völse stood strong she got up and sat between the boat bunny and Roar. Her Mornir engulfed Völse. They did not move. Maren held on to the neck of the elkhead. Roar held on to Maren. They sat still. Their legs dangled sometimes along Noatun's hull. The waves clucked against Noatun's bow. Love watched Maren and Roar and thought that it was very beautiful. So calm, so much awe. A long enjoyment. Love filled her lungs with sea smells. She had not thought that a trip could be so enjoyable. Now she knew.

Gladly, she swept her bearskin around herself. For a while she thought she might crawl into bed with Visten but he seemed to be asleep so she stayed where she was. She pulled the bearskin tighter around her.

Love awoke with a jerk. The storm had come quickly. The Sun was already quite high. She must have slept for a long time. Now the winds blew sharply. Ingolf and Roar had taken in the sail at dawn and it had stayed quiet but now the wind began to blow more and more and they rowed towards the coast as quickly as possible. Roar said he had the cunning that a reef would lie before the Skanör island. In order not to sail onto the reef, they must keep a careful lookout. The reef had already taken many lives and there could also be evil demons driving the ship towards the rocks. Perhaps they would sail carelessly and disturb the evil spirits. Roar put himself in the bow and steered Noatun past the reef, despite the strong waves.

They went ashore at the half-island of Skanör. The sandy beach spread out mile after mile and they had a hard time finding a suitable place to pull up Noatun in safety of the high waves.

They took the ship almost to the grass-line to make sure it was safe from being washed out to sea. Tired, they went inland. No folks or buildings were in sight. Sand and only sand. Trees that held the sand in place. That was all they saw. They followed a path further inland and after a while they found an abandoned hut in which they took shelter from the rain.

The hut seemed well built, with a layer of soil as a roof, which gave good shelter, and the Rosers quickly made themselves at home. Roar sang a new song about the Rosers making forays on the Skanör beach.

They did not sleep long and were soon on their feet again. Noatun had come through the adventure without damage. Everyone helped to launch the ship into the sea and Rosers boarded Noatun. The ship

headed towards the land of the Danes rather than taking the safer route across Saltholmen. The storm had abated and the risk of another was very small.

They aimed for the southern part of Ullerup island and then further to the south, to the Solrød Strand and Karl's Lund. The lake was calm, like the Køge bay, and they reached the Karl's Lund without any hardship, where they pulled up Noatun and camped.

As soon as the Rosers came ashore they saw many folk walking towards the inland. They looked like lemmings. All lugged equipment with them for the feast: holy signs, skins, food, ale, drinks.

A Dane waved to the Rosers and said aloud, "Are you going to Rodeskilde?"

"Yes. I guess we should follow the others," said Karla.

"Yes, that is what you should do," answered the Dane and smiled with his whole round ansyn and big red beard. "Where do you come from?"

"We come from the land of the Roden law and we're going to Newgrange."

"Are you going to Newgrange? I have wanted to go to Newgrange many times but the Readan has not allowed me, so it has not happened. But we don't have time to stand here and chat. We have to set off: once the best seats are taken then you get a bad market stand and perhaps even worse, you may not get a glimpse of the players and the bronze-lur blowers and that would be a damned shame."

"Quite right," said Love, "do you need help to carry things? We have some spare pairs of hands."

"Great," said the Danish friend, and kept on; "On the way we shall visit my best friend. No one brews better Ale in the Vanir world. It tastes wonderful. Karl on the rock makes the best ale. His ale gives power and strength, dance-lewd, knowledge, cosiness, kindness and happiness. Karl can brew like no other. His Ale is widely known in the land of the Danes."

They lent a hand with his luggage and headed inland. They walked for two hours until the sun had changed position. The Rosers and their newly found Danish friend came to three longhouses and ten small houses standing on a small hill. All the people in the village were working. Barrels of ale were rolled back and forth. Grain was carried in and out of the houses. Water was canned with jugs from the small stream that rippled to the left of the hill.

"There's Karl of Bjergets village," called out the round-nosed Dane thirstily.

"Is that a mountain?" wondered Ingolf.

"Yes," said the Dane proudly, "as I'm called Flemming."

Flemming eked the speed towards the village and the people saw that they had guests and called to their master that Flemming was nearing. Cheers and happy shouts met the Rosers and Flemming when they came into the village. Suddenly Karl himself rushed out and snatched Flemming to swing him round in a meeting-dance. The Dance swirled around. Karl took hold of Flemming's wrists and Flemming did likewise.

The swirl took off. They used the thrust of the dance to eke the fast speed. The dust whirled around their feet. The ale brewers halted the rolling of ale barrels and clapped their hands. The outcome was that Karl and Flemming danced even faster. Now Karl gripped Flemming with one hand and led Flemming to a row of ale-barrels that were lined up in a row along one of the long houses' outside

walls. The barrels were covered with wooden lids. Karl began the dance on top of the barrels, on the lids. A new dance with the same wrist- grip. All the Danes and the Rosers were yelling and clapping their hands. The steady handclapping made a sough that made the stepping men even wilder.

This was a show! thought Love thought and laughed with both her ansyn and stomach. Suddenly the lid broke on one of ale barrels and Flemming fell straight down into the ale. The ale foamed and everyone laughed. Karl jumped down from the ale-barrels and said that everyone had to drink freely from the barrel with Flemming and Flemming would not be allowed to leave the barrel until the ale had been drunk.

Flemming, who had just come up out of the ale, squeezed his red beard so that the ale ran into the barrel and everyone roared with laughter. Everyone rushed after their jugs, cups or anything they could hold of and then they gathered around Flemming.

The heave and haul of ale began. Flemming shouted to the Rosers to come and help him empty the barrel. Otherwise he could not leave, he said laughing. Love, Visten, Karla, Maren, Ingolf and Roar stood around in the barrel along with other village folks, who greeted the Rosers.

“Welcome to Karl on Bjerget,” they said and drank ale to save Flemming. Love eagerly asked Karl how they could brew such a good ale. Karl backed off slightly, leaned back, took her under his arm and began to tell.

“We gather in a house and talk about what to do when the summer begins. Whilst we are chatting the girls are chewing seed cores. They form the mash into balls and churn them in pots filled with water. Thereafter, the mash stands for a few days to ferment itself. This spit-balls will give strength to the ale. We also add honey. We gather many types of honey and add a honey blend. We call the blend *kvas* from the god Kvasir. Sometimes we use newly grown pine shoots or *furans* as some Danes call them.

“From the north, we have taken the wont of adding ale-grass. Other plants that are added are called mead-plant, fuggles, hops or other kinds of grass. Pore is sometimes used. Right now it is out of *smak*. But the *smak* is changing very fast so you never know.

“I myself, am not so fond of pore. I like the Heather Ale that the Picters in Scotland brew. The Heather Ale is made from heather flowers, and of these, we have not so much here in Daneland. But it tastes sweet and good. They keep the knowledge of how to brew the blend hidden, as we keep our blending-knowledge hidden, but I can say that the water means a lot. The water must be kept clean and taken before becoming too old. It would not be such a good ale if it has been standing too long.”

Karl kept on telling his story, after taking yet another sip of ale to quench his thirst. The Danes and the Rosers looked down into the large Ale barrel and understood that it would be late before they had drunk all of it. Flemming's big body had swelled away much ale but there was still a lot of ale to drink. Flemming bawled and shook his head. He said he was getting swampyn the knees. Whether this was due to the ale outside or inside, no one could tell.

“Love, you know, we use ale at holy tides and it is very sought-after. The farmers, that is the bonders and herders, will fare from afar to trade kegs with the chosen ale. We brew a chosen ale for the wedding, called Bridal ale. For births we brew birth ale and at a burials we brew Grave ale or Leif ale. The ale must be brewed in the right way to make it taste the best. Sometimes the High Readan will taste the ale and give a yes or a no as to whether it is good and allowed.

“At Yuletide we brew Yuletide ale. In that ale we add chosen Yule weeds to get the good Yule *smak*. If we fail, many women and men will come to us and say that the Yuletide is not the same. It may bring bad luck, making the whole Yuletide a failure. It’s easier at Midsummer, when all folks should have brewed ale themselves. At least two kegs per family. Then we brew the bring-together ale that must be available for the fruitfulness sidr and the Holy Sidr.”

Love asked if the Danes shared their bylaw of sending out the tidings of a Midsummer wedding as early as at Yuletide. Karl answered that this was the bylaw and law among the Danes and it will stay that way forever.

Karl walked off to the Ale-barrels to see how far his guests and the Danish folks had come with saving Flemming and his meekyneers. Flemming stretched out his arms to Karl and while the round-mawed men hugged, Karl peered down into the tub.

“Hey! Wow, so little drunk. I thought you Rosers, could drink. Although you have been helped by the skilled drinker Flemming and his friends there is still ale left in the tank.”

“We will drink to the last drop of ale,” slurred a drunken Visten and smiled with his whole ansyn.

“We will try to eke the drinking speed,” said Roar, somewhat more steadily but more sheepishly.

“It takes both cunning and strength to drink real ale,” said Karl. He smiled and went into one of the long houses.

After a while he came out followed by a train of women and men who worked in the houses. The man said they needed a break and a boost and they would do some “twosome” drinking, which was usually when the heavy drinking would take off.

Karl told all the men to take up their tokens of ale and to carry a token on a bit of wood or stone and then put it in the pot Karl was using as a vessel. Then he told all women to stand in a row along one of the long houses to draw lots.

Each woman had to pull a lot with a token of ale, and the man who put in the token stood up and got a big horn to drink from. With every drawn lot the thrill eked and the crowd screamed.

Maren got a slender Dane on her lot and everyone wondered how long he would cope. Maren was a man-eater. Karla got a young lad who looked beautiful and had a dazzling white smile. Karla happily took the ale horn and took her man by his forearm, filled the horn and they went “twosome” drinking.

Roar and Visten got two sweet Danish girls on their lots and they filled their horns and waved to Roar and Visten to follow. Visten and Roar left with the good-looking Danish girls. Ingolf had already swilled many jugs of ale. He staggered into one of the long houses, groped around in the dark and then threw up in a pot of fresh water. Then he fell asleep neatly beside the pot.

Love was the only one left when the last token was to be handed out. There remained a tall Dane available. Love thought he looked nice and looked into his daydream eyes. They smiled at each other and went off into a yard to sit on a hill. Love asked him about the Danes’ clothing, what they liked to wear and when. The Dane, who called himself Willgood, told the best he could and listed the Danish holidays: Midsummer, the crayfish feast of the harvest months, the fall eve feast, the goose dinner, Yuletide at Midwinter, Disatungel in Göje month that is one and a half month after Midwinter, Spring eve that is the very middle of the spring, the May days and the many feasts and events which he had forgotten.



They toasted and Love told him about the Rosers' feasts and how to work the earth with a hack-axe. Willgood thought the Rosers' allotments of earth seemed to be a little too thin, at least compared to the Danish earth. Love answered that there are not many soils that are as good as the Danish soil.

Two belly-mawed Danes juggled out the last drops of the ale barrel and Flemming tumbled out, drunk as an owl. As the ale dried up in the barrel the Danes and Rosers went to sleep.

Love thought that Danish bonders had left behind the hacking wonts. The Danes had more metal ploughs and more horses. The number of folk also seemed to be larger, this was clear. The fields could feed more women and men, so they could keep more people with food, thus a bigger tribe. Love could not help but felt a little sad when she thought about the bylaws and wonts that were about to wane. She soothed herself quickly with her mother Leuftsta's words "everything goes in waves, everything will come again, and so it will keep on," . The Hofgydya Leufsta had told her about the full year or a Great Year. "It runs about twenty-five thousand nine hundred and twenty years. Then all the stars, moons and so on have made full turn and everything repeats itself, stars, moons and sun will battle with the evil."

Love cast a lewd look at Willgood. He was good-looking, dark-blonde, with broad cheeks, a well-groomed beard, brown kirtle, strong bones and what Love liked the most was his knees. She thought that sexy knees can make every girl weak in her legs. She stopped and asked if they had any holy causeway near. Willgood answered that they had not, but they used to go to the Tune or, if there was a big feast, to Rodeskilde.

"Let us go away to a place you like and esteem high," said Love to Willgood.

"I'd like that," said Willgood and smiled.

She smiled back at him and put the drinking horn next to Flemming, who had fallen asleep on a log with his arms hanging out along the log. They went through the woods and up a slope that gave views over the Køge bay. At the top was a Skjalf. Willgood told Love that the Skjalf not used anymore by the Saami herders, who used to worship their Gods and Goddesses here but had now gone further north.

Love loved the view. The wind blew warm over their bodies and she put her arm around his waist and pulled him to her. They kissed awesomely and she took him by the hand and brought him under the Skjalf. The Skjalf was made of wood and set in the north-south headway. Six six-foot poles held up the Skjalf and dried leaves and branches formed the platform from which the shaman worked.

In order not to barge in and harm the hugs of the Skjalf and the little trolls Love said that they would be under the Skjalf. To further worship the Skjalf a meeting between Völse and Mornir would keep all the bad away. Love felt horniness widen her nostrils. She undid his belt and pulled off his kirtle.

"Eke,Völse, you are grown and come forward."

Karla had a tough job to get life into Visten and Ingolf. Flemming had fallen out of the barrel and slept on the ground with the broken lid as a pillow. The Danes had wished everybody well. All were happy and full.

Karl on Bjerget carried on his duties happily. Roar and Maren saw how more and more people came wandering on the way to Rodeskilde. They were eager to get going. They wondered where Love had gone and asked Roar if he knew but he said that he had not seen her. They helped to wake up Visten, Ingolf and Flemming. They got food from Karl on Bjerget who laughed so hard that his stomach swung when he saw Flemming sleeping next to the ale barrel with the broken lid as a pillow.

After a while Love and Willgood came hand in hand from the woods. Love shone like the sun. Now all the Rosers had gathered, even Rodulf, who had returned from the ship Noatun to ensure that all the equipment was safe and that they could set off.

Even Flemming was live and kicking and the Rosers began to march towards Rodeskilde after wishing Karl and all the Danes goodbye and the Danes had wished the Rosers good luck on their sea-fare. It was not very hard to find the way to Rodeskilde. More people joined them. It was fun to walk together. Many came from the villages of Bohus and from Tanum, from Falster, Lolland, Funen, Ribe, Jutland, Varde, Djursland, Varberg, Drammen, Søgne, Eydehavn, Kusanweoh and Besingaheargh, the latter being villages in the land of the Angles.

Love spoke with the twain from Besingaheargh and was told that they had come to worship music. They had heard that there would be bronze-lur playing and that it was the well-known Sunne that would play. She had been on the Faroe Islands and played for the people there and become both allowed as a Vigydya and well-known.

Love also asked the Angles from Besingaheargh if the name Brisingamen came from their village. Brisingamen was the golden neckless of the Goddess Freya. Heargh meant Harg in Anglian and Saxon speech.

Love awaited a lot from the visit to the Rodeskilde. The group of Rosers with Flemming and other followers passed the village Tune and came after some time to a Rod that marked the marketplace. Maren said she thought the marketplace was almost too big.

“How do you find your way here? We’re going to lose each other,” wondered Karla.

“We can agree to meet at the large bridge over the Rod river every dawn. If someone gets lost, we have to return within three days,” said Maren sharply and stubbornly. All agreed.

Love could see all kinds of goods and wares being traded. There was a very wide range of things. Some wares were good and others you did not understand why anybody would buy them but the sellers shouted to sell their wares, as overwhelmingly as everywhere in the Vanir land. Most had their wares laid out on blankets, others had brought piles and tensed up hides to shield both the goods and themselves against the sun's drilling rays. There were so many people. There were people everywhere.

Ingolf thought he had never seen so many people gathered in one place before. The overall feeling was easy. No uproar, no brawling. The Lunda-gydjas and Lunda-gothis walked around and chatted with everyone. Large barrels of mead and ale were drunk in no time. From far away Love could hear the music fade. Suddenly they saw a man in a tall headdress with ground greaves under his feet skating on the ground. Ingolf chuckled and said that he thought that Danes could not skate.

“They can’t. You can see. This man does not understand that one needs ice to skate,” said Visten wisely.

“It doesn’t matter, he’s having fun,” said Ingolf. “The main thing is to have fun.”

They put up the tent they had brought with them and then went to see everything that the Rodeskilde market had to show. Love was engulfed by all the things and all the people who seemed to be doing something. They were busy picking up their goods or playing on instruments that made some kind of sough or sound. Everywhere there were stands and the sellers spreading their wares on a cloth.

Love wanted to see the swingers. Ingolf had also shown great interest for gigs and went with Love. They went through the crowds and enjoyed being there, hearing all the sounds and seeing all the things around them. Flemming had said that the musicians and swingers used to gather around the hills. Around the hills sat the viewers, listening. Love heard how whiners howled and whined and she saw how three women spun their whiners on a hill to the right of the middle of the market.

“Ingolf, let us go to the whiners, I want to listen to these swingers,” said Love and went to the hill straight away.

“Sure,” said Ingolf, “but then I want to hear the sough of the Balkåkra drums.”

“Of course,” said Love, smiling.

They came to the hill and sat down. Many listeners had already gathered. The three women, dressed in brown linen tops and yellow skirts, whirled the whiners at different speeds and spun a din such that that Love had never heard. Around their shins and calves the three women had the brown leggings and hazelnut-rattles. They stomped with their feet and hit a beat and the low-dinned whiners to make the sough.

The whiners were made of wood and were five inches long. They were flat and about one inch wide. On the whiners the women had carved sun signs to greet the sun god Ull and earth goddess Njård. Enthralled, Love saw how they had also carved signs of the Maypole, the holy worship when Njård teems with Ull. She leaned her head back and felt how her whole body tingled. Ingolf had traded and came back with two wooden jugs full of fresh ale. Love tasted it and listened to the whining women.

Behind the whining women, four jumpers and jesters spun in somersaults and jumped over each other. They jumped around and made funny ansyns. Some of them could really turn his or her ansyn inside out and the viewers laughed. One of the women walked around in the crowd and gathered little gifts: a bit of bone, an awl, a bit of flint, and even a pig’s tusk, which caused great joy among the women.

Love heard the calls from the sellers in the background and the buzz from the market. How could so many people gather in one place? But it had happened before and it would happen in the future, she thought and lay down. She looked straight up into the bright blue sky and smiled.

From another hill, she could hear how two flute-blowers played on their bone flutes. To help, three men played on scrapers. They had many different lengths of bone scrapers, each of them with one edge hacked. One could pull another bone over the tags, which gave a scraping sound or sough. The scratch added speed and the flutes played the loops. The two flute players blew their bird-bone-pipes, two and a half inches long. They blew through every second time, taking turns.

Changes in pitch were mainly due to the flute-players blowing their bones from the other end. The lower tube end was covered with a finger. The beat and speed allured the crowd of listeners to join in with handclaps or with the rattles they wore around the wrists or ankles. Love got a hazelnut band from a Danish girl who sat next to her. She just smiled and took off one of her many rattle bands. She told Love that she had made a hazelnut rattle band for each visit in Rodeskilde. The Danish girl had a whole arm full of them. She added that she would like to have the rattles band back, otherwise it would be hard to remember that year. Love asked which year the rattle band came from. The Danish girl answered that two years ago she made the band and had worn it ever since.

The listening crowd broke out into a beat that slowly changed when the two flute-players swapped rattles and tone. Rattles, tassels, the crowd stood up and swayed with the beat. Ingolf did the same,

happy in a growing buzz. Love kept the beat with her rattle. She enjoyed life. She lay flat on her back and took a few deep breaths. Great to fare, even if she sometimes longed back to the Roden land. But now she could look around, to get lessons that would last a lifetime.

Love's thinking was broken when bird bone flutes were swapped for flint flutes, which gave another sound. Two small three-inch flutes that the Earth goddess Njård had buried for thousands of years in the earth and had been trimmed by the flute player to give the right sound. Smooth, awesome dins came from their pipes, followed by handclapping and the listeners' rattling. Almost everyone shared in making the din. Love thought the feeling was wonderful. The weather gods were showing their best side. The air felt hot. The sun shone.

Love saw the flute players' fingers ran over the flint hole. The players deftly changed side switched between the flint and bird bone pipes. Another flute player came from the hill and sat down next to the other two. She took out a smaller, longer flute also made of bird bones, which had four holes aside from the openings back and front. Her fingers crossed the flute and the high din mixed with the hazelnut rattles. The two flint flute players switched to bird bone pipes and began playing the same din as the woman with the long flute.

After a while, the show calmed down and the swingers or listeners - sometimes it was hard to decide who was who - lay down on the grass slope and rested. The newest woman picked up a tystie-pipe.

Good calls came from the listeners straight away, when they recognized the sound of the tystie. The crowd whistled and tried to feign the tystie's sound, but no one could feign the sound of the woman with the tystie-pipe.

Love lay on the slope and drowsed a while. Ingolf came and woke her.

"Love, come with me, further away, the swingers have begun to play. Uj uj, what swinging!" said Ingolf, breathily and showing his youthful hug.

Love sat up. She looked around. She must have dozed quite a while. The sun had already moved much. She stretched out her sun-hand, her right hand, spread her fingers and measured against the land line far away. She made a rough time guess, stood up and walked towards the place that Ingolf had found. Love heard from afar the sough from the Sangelstein, also called the sing-stone, the stone that sang. People sat already in rows around it. The Hopts and Bonds marked the Hargen, or Horgen, as they are sometimes called the Harg or the Heargh or Harrow.

The Hopts were three foot high poles that held up the nine foot long bond, the cloth between the Hopts. The bond, a foot or sometimes two feet wide, was hanging down between the Hopts. They created an oblong square. In the middle of the square was the Sangelstein.

Around it lay three more sing-stones. In front of each sing-stone sat a sing-stone rock player dressed in a brown kirtle. A round woman and a slender man stood dressed in yellow robes in front of the Sangelstein, each with their own hitting-stone in their hand. The cup marks of the hollowed surface of the Sangelstein gave a feeling of foreverness. Love thought how the Rodeskilde foremothers and forefathers had scored these cup marks long ago and how they still used the Holy Sangelsstein. It was weighty to keep this old Sidr. Otherwise people would feel lost, as Uncle Hauskuld used to say. How right he was, skilled and old, an alderman as he was, thought Love as they neared the holy place.

A tow of five dancing, swinging, women and four men neared the holy place in a long, slithering dance. They were clad in white ankle-length kirtles, with crocheted tokens of the Sangelstein on the

edges. They danced slowly into the Heargh and held hands. They came in and danced, swung, three times around the stone.

While the dancers danced slowly by, three clay-drummers slid in and sat in front of the three sing-stones. The sing-stone players and clay-drummers smiled at each other and nodded. The width of the clay-drum was nearly ten inches, thought Ingolf and leaned over towards Love after taking his place in the grass. The drum skin was made from deer skins stretched over the clay-vessel's opening and fastened with thirteen tacks. The drummers were beating their drums with their hands and sing-stone-rock players picked up the beat and gameplay began.

Ingolf felt that he had heaved and hauled too much ale too quickly and had to rush into the bushes to throw up. Unluckily, he did not see the Danish girl who was about to pee and threw up straight into her hair. She rose angrily to wallop Ingolf while the next round of spew came up right into her ansyn. The ground was too soggy and they grabbed each other so they did not fall over, which they did anyway. The Danish girl had a hard time moving with her skirt around her knees. They rose from the mud and Ingolf got fully walloped, which he answered with a new waterfall. The spew-covered girl pulled up her skirt and went away angrily. When Ingolf had finished throwing up he felt better and went back to Love.

The dancers moved like fairies, thought Love. She could not see their feet as they had ankle-length serks and they seemed to glide forwards. The long, curling dance slithered fairy-like around the drummer and the sing-stone rockers. The beat was kept by the large Sangelstein by the man and the woman who both beat with a hitting stone. Love thought they were a Harggydja and Harggothi but they did not have the right signs. On the other hand, the signs may not be needed for this serk, thought Love.

Suddenly, unseen by the viewers and by Love and Ingolf, four women appeared playing mouth-bows. The women held the 25-inch rowan bows with mouth-chewed bowstrings from elk. In the mouth and through the hole in the mouth they made manifold dins. The mouth was also used to eke the sound, Love found out.

Whilst snapping on the bowstrings the four mouth-bow players towed into the Heargh and stood in the right corner. They also began to hum as they touched on the bowstrings. Ingolf sat gaping in wonder at the beauty of the sough. He turned towards Love, who nodded as she had the same feeling. She told Ingolf to close his mouth and not share the spew-breath. Ingolf looked sourly at Love.

The women playing rowan bows hummed and drove a steady beat. They gave a signal to the swingers to carry on dancing around the sing-stones and the Sangelstein. The sound of rock against rock made a hefty metallic sound that could only be matched by the corncrake.

The sound drilled into the bone and marrow of the people so deeply that it did not want to leave the body. The sound almost stunned Love, yet she wanted to hear more of these alluring tones.

With a jolt the strong woman stood in her light blue serk and stretched out her arms. Her movement made all participants around the Heargh take each others' hands. Love and Ingolf stretched out their hands and grasped the nearest woman's hands. The Sangelstein woman began to rock slowly. She rocked back and forth, slowly, slowly. All the partakers did the same. The rocking carried on. The woman went out and put her Heargh-hand on the nearest partaker's shoulder, thus creating a beat for that ring. She went to each ring of rockers, to make them rock in manifold ways, but always to the beat.

She returned to the Heargh. All heeded her call and Love could see that the whole field of people seemed to rock. "Like the sea, the rocking means the sea, and all the gifts the sea gives," said the

Danish girl who had traded two jugs of ale against a bit of a pig pasture given to her by Ingolf. She added, "they call me Greite," and smiled at both Love and Ingolf. Ingolf hoped Greite was not the best friend of the girl whose hair he had puked in.

"The sea talks to us in many ways," answered Love and found she would have understood the kenning long before. She smiled back at Greite and pressed her hand, rocking back and forth.

The nine dancers eked the speed of the dance around the ring and the Sangelstein. The rowan bow players moved from left to right at the rear of the Heargh and the sound from the rock players pounded even faster. The dancers gathered in a ring around the outer ring stones and began to run the dance. Round and round in a sun-wise lap they danced around the ring and Sangelsteins. Suddenly, a tall, strong woman made a sign that Love did not understand. Love had not learned this sign, which made her doubt whether the woman really was a Harg-gydja or not. Perhaps this Heargh did not have holy measurements, maets, perhaps this Heargh was an under-Heargh. Love could not really make the call and did not get time to either, as three jesters jumped in front of the strong woman in the light blue suit and stood as an up-side down Mornir, that is two jesters at the bottom and the third on top.

She had jumped up onto the men's shoulders. All clapped the beat with their hands and feet.

"The milk, the milk, we want to see milk flow, milk, milk, we want to see the milk," scratched and yelled the partakers with awesome delight.

Love and Ingolf were carried away by the thrill and the might of the stomping and hand-clapping. The dancers went around and cheered on the partakers to roar, stomp and clap as much as they could.

The slender Sangelstein man raised a clay jug that had stood between him and the woman in the yellow dress. He gave it to the woman with a bow. She lifted the clay-vessel with both hands and the partakers roared. It felt like the sky lifted itself, Love thought. Around Love and Ingolf many people had gathered. It began to be delightfully crowded.

When the Sangelstein-woman lifted the clay-vessel with the holy milk the crowd pushed. Love felt how she was lifted up together with the other dancers, swingers, rockers - yes the whole crowd. She and the others hovered above the ground. Love saw that Ingolf was lifted by the packed crowd. Love felt someone rubbing against her. It was so crowded that she could not turn around. Now she felt how a hand searched her back and bosom. Love let the hand keep on the groping. She felt the hand reach her Mornir and still she could not do anything. It was so crowded that even with the greatest effort, she could only move her arms. When the pushing faded the groping hand went away.

The Sangelsteins-woman with the clay-vessel in her hands shook the jar and a new deafening roar was heard. Love asked Greite, who was standing in front of her, what the holy milk was made of. Half wheezing due to the pressure from all the partakers, Greite hissed that the milk was made from goat milk from a new goat mother and that some of the women from Rodeskilde who had newly given life to a child had sprayed their milk into the clay vessel. The Hørggydja had even added some hidden herbs to eke the holiness of the milk.

Now the Sangelstein woman went to the jesters and handed the clay vessel to the jester who stood on top. She took it carefully and rose slowly to avoid losing her steadfast stand and not to drop it. Love saw her thigh muscles worked when she stood up slowly. The two jesters stood still and looked up to see that everything went as it should. She straightened the left foot and brought it slightly ahead of the taller jester's shoulder. The jester woman, who wore a brown kirtle and legwarmers and around her neck a bronze necklace, stood up and raised the clay vessel above her head.

“We want to see milk spread, we want to see milk spread, “ shouted the whole crowd together.

Love felt a tight squeeze from all the people around her. The crowd moved slowly back and forth. Love was hovering. Sometimes she felt the ground under her feet, sometimes not, but she did not care. She felt how she belonged to this Sidr, this Sidr had been carved out by many thousands of years, and that gave her the rightful Hug. She felt kinship with the people around who carried her, she felt kinship with all the rules and bylaws that the kins worshiped. She felt like a part of a whole. And the whole was very winsome, like all the parts that were the whole.

The slender man looked at the strong woman in the light blue serk and they nodded to each other. The woman showed with her hands to the sing-stone rock players and the rowan bow fiddlers that it was time to step up the speed. They played even faster and the dancers swung for hours, more and more wildly. The bawlers bawled. The folk shouted, stomped the beat, clapped their hands if they could. Many were so crowded that they could neither move their hands nor their feet.

When the screams, the drums, the sound from the stones and the ash hoops peaked, the woman in the light blue serk slowly lifted her hand and let it fall quickly. It was the sign to let the clay-vessel fall.

The jester woman smiled and dropped the clay vessel, which crashed straight down onto the Sangelstein. The sound of the blast when it was blown into thousand bits gave a sough that Love had never heard before in her life. Its milk spread over the Sangelstein and gathered in the many cup-carvings that were everywhere in the holy Stein.

Now the kinsmen called for Bejla, the helper of the fruitfulness god Frey. Bejla was the small goddess that would ensure that people got their daily bread. A lady! The barley-wight Byggvir was also a helper to the fruitfulness god Frey: Byggvir was the caregiver that ensures that the grain grows. Bejla baked the holy bread and gave it to the kinsmen.

The cries to Bejla grew louder and louder. “Bejla, Bejla, Bejla, Give us bread, let us taste your holy bread!”

The cries resounded from an ever more aroused crowd of kinsmen. The dancers, who had gathered outside the Hearn, came in with baskets full of awesome and freshly baked barley bread. Nine baskets with good-smelling barley bread were put in front of the sound stones.

The woman in the light blue serk walked three times around the Sangelstein and then dropped her arms in a welcoming sign, the sign that the meal could begin. The dancers and swingers had already loosened the Bonds so that Hearn-frithur would not become un-awed.

The kinsmen rushed forward to the bread and dipped bread in the milk in the cup-marks on the Sangelstein. It was really crowded in front of the Sangelstein but no one cared. Love made her way to the Sangelstein and got a couple of bits of bread. Greite smiled raunchily when she handed over the bread to Love. Love smiled back and sent the bread, now soggy with holy milk, back to Greite. It was crowded but without skirmish. In time, everyone got their bit of soggy bread and then went back to his or her place outside the Hearn or returned to their places in the huts. Sometimes somebody grabbed too many bits of bread and stuffed them in their mouth but was walloped by the sing-stone players, who told them that there were others who had not got their bits of soggy bread.

Love and Ingolf took leave of Greite and returned to the Rosers' camp. A wide-eyed Ingolf told Karla and Maren about the show and the bylaw they had shared. Love and Rodulf went through the number

of days they had left to sea-fare to get to Newgrange in time for Midsummer. Rodulf warned that bad weather would slow the sea-fare. Love felt they should get going tomorrow. Rodulf and Roar nodded.

They were lying still and resting when Flemming came up with new jugs of ale and told them about the evening's events. He shared richly.

"Flemming, there is no one is like you, you should know," said Ingolf, smiling.

"Oh, Ingolf, you won't get far with flattery", said Flemming. He gave Ingolf more ale, laughing so that his red beard jumped. Vipps from the morning's meal fell out of his beard, which made Flemming and Ingolf bend double with laughter.

"Ingolf, I have not laughed this much since my mother-in-law broke a leg. I mean, when she broke the leg on Yuletide pig and got the bone marrow in her eye," said Fleming and roared with laughter.

When he had recovered from laughing he carried on, "You must not miss the tow at the Rodeskilde causeway. You will be stunned by all the fun gadgets to play with," said Flemming proudly and self-assuredly.

"Yeah, we will not miss the tow," said Love and the Rosers nodded.

The sun sank slowly on the land line and Love, Karla and Maren went towards causeway. The other Rosers had already gone to the cult place. The crowds walked towards the causeway. They went kin by kin. Each tribe stuck together. Of course, some people who knew each other went together but mostly they went kin by kin. At Rodeskilde the causeway walk lay awesomely by the river and its length was the same as at the Røsa Ring in Bro, a thousands ells. The width of the causeway was about ten feet. Here, was in Røsa ring, there was a small house at the beginning of causeway, a house for grooming, with the measures of 18 by 10 feet, where the players, the Gydyas, the Gothis and the dancers and most weightily of all, the the Settras groomed.

The Rosers took place so they could see both the entrance to the causeway and the Feast in the middle of the feast square. People sat kin by kin: The Friezes and Trønder, the Bohuslänmen, the Anglers, the folks from Norfolk and the folks from Suffolk, the Lindsey-bonders and even a few women from Karnak in the land of the Normans, some Tavastians, some Esthers, the Latvians, some Orkney-bonders had come here to be at this fiddler feast. This feast was nearly larger than the Midsummer feast.

Out of the cult house at in the beginning of the holy causeway came a Harggothi and three Lundagydjäs, who marched forward in time. Meanwhile the din from some bronze-lurs was heard far away. Love could not find where the din came and lost heed of the din because there were so many other things to fix her gaze. A long row of players marched proudly up with bronze rattles. Each bronze-rattle was made of two waning-shaped bronze rounds, about two inches in width, strung on a bronze ring. In fact the bronze rattles were horse equipment but the Rodeskilde folk had worked out an early bylaw to walk around with bronze rattles when walking high along the causeway.

The Rodeskilde folk had made bronze rattles of many sizes. The first had two bronze rings, the next had three or up to five rings and was twice or thrice the size. They were met by the kinsmen's own rattles and the rattling crafted a wave along the holy causeway.

The drummer beat on his drum so loudly that the sough rang in Love's ears. The first drummer beat on a big drum that was standing on struts on the ground. The drum hung in the struts so the sound would not lose power. The blows echoed over the landscape and caught the holy sidr in an enthralling way.



After the big drum came three smaller clay drums that flapped in the wind. The drummers banged on the tensed deer skins at a fast speed and the folks helped to keep the beat. Slowly the drummers and the kinsmen neared the end of the holy causeway. Love saw how the kinsmen turned around to watch the beginning of the holy feast. This time Love saw a Vigydyia on a wagon, wearing a very sheer faded yellow kirtle with wheels and sun signs along its edges.

The Vigydyia sat on her knees in front of a mound on which a Balkåkra-gong or drum was put on struts. The Balkåkra-gong was round, bent lightly inwards with carved bronze rounds, had a width of 14 inches and stood on a rounded strut of bronze. Its lower part was made of ten sun crosses that crafted its legs. In the middle of the Balkåkra-gong were twenty-six holes of about one and one-half inch width.

Gently and carefully the Vigydyia brought a small club, whose head was made of woolen thread coated with leather. She held the club's wooden handle with care. The wagon was drawn by a holy horse. Quietly and proudly the wagon was pulled along the holy causeway. The Gong's graceful din spread among the folks, who fell still when the wagon came and who showed their awe by sitting on their knees as it went by.

When Rodulf heard the brawl of the bronze-lurs he said that it was good that they had left their bronze-lur left in the ship Noatun. It could fare badly, or someone could break it if a mishap happened. Moreover, it would not be good for the friendship to bring such a fine lur and not give it to the Danes. Rodulf said to Love that would be understood as ugly. Love agreed.

They turned and saw the bronze-lurs towing along the holy causeway. Love was enthralled by the lustre the bronze-lur-towing brought forth. Five twains of bronze-lurs, it was likely the largest number of bronze-lurs gathered at one feast. Love did not wait for an answer from Greite who had come. Ingolf held her firmly by the hand and smiled like the sun.

"Love, you can't let a girl as sweet as Greite out of sight," said Ingolf somewhat sheepishly.

Love smiled and answered, "I had a feeling that I would see you again Greite. I'm pleased."

"In response to your question about the reckon of the bronze-lurs, there are many more lurking elsewhere, but five lur-twains together, few feasts may brag about that number. There is some jealousy about which town can gather the largest number and the finest bronze-lurs. So far we in Rodeskilde lead but I know that in Jutland they also have many great lurs, but if they can go as low as our big bronze-lurs. If anyone would wrangle those who know the stars will deem," said Greite and hugged Ingolf.

Greite barely had time to end her wording when the five bronze-lur twains neared the place where the Rosers were. The first four lur-twains seemed to be small enough to carry by hand. They were from five to eight feet long in their most unfolded form. The long thin-walled, curled tubes, curved in two planes, with a round carved end plate with sun signs, and a burrow-shaped nozzle. The bronze-lurs were always in pair of curved tubes equal to each other. Love saw the rattles that hung at the handset end plate and at the handset's mouth. The rattles sounded at the slightest gust of wind or the slightest movement from the lur-blowers.

Greite told them about the weightiness of the bronze end-sheets. The six sun-tokens showed that the sun would always come back and shine on us and when the sounds from the bronze-lur mean that we ask the sun to come back, not to forget us during the dark times when the sun wanes more and more. The worst thing would be the Fimbul- winter, the winter that stays for ever. That would kill us all. We

would freeze to death and everything around us would wither, spring flowers would not grow up and we would forget spring's awesome fruitfulness games, Greite said, upset and on the verge of forgetting where she was. She calmed down when the bronze-lur-blowers began to take turns in blowing. The left bronze-lurs played a loop while they waited for the right bronze-lur to take over when the air runs out for those who played. In this way there was always a din and the sun would not miss our worship and our boon of heat and light. As much heat and light as the sun could give, and for a long time. Behind the first four lur-twains came a giant bronze-lur-twain bolstered by two poles borne by two helpers, the blower could heed on blowing.

"These lurs are big but they don't beat the handset we have with us, I don't think," said Ingolf and scratched his chin.

"Turid's handset is slightly bigger, but not much," said Karla and looked sharply at the tools of sough. Large ear cups gave a low thundering dins that echoed all over the folks that shaped their hands around their mouths to match the handset's low tones. The kinsmen hummed and Love thought that the whole ground was shaking because of the low tones that rushed into every hole of the body. Love found she shook all over when big bronze-lurs brawled and roared by. The holy tow with the Bronze-lurs walked to the end of the holy causeway where the Vigdyas had made a welcome.

The bronze-lurs-blowers walked the thousand ells to the end of holy causeway. The end was built as a roundel, nine ells in width. The round Vi-place was marked by a ditch dug up and the earth from the two foot deep trench formed a wall, which crafted a border. There were also eighteen wooden rods about nine feet each standing around and outside the Vi-plac<sup>3</sup>. Thus one row of poles or row of rods, then a round wall and then a ditch.

The Gothis told the kinsmen to follow the blowers slowly. Not too fast, they have to be able to keep the tone and walk at the same time. It was very hard for the big twain of bronze-lurs, with the two helpers who bore the handset with two fork-crotches. All four had to walk at the same speed.

The sun-wagon was already in place and made the background in the round Vi-place. Instead of a Stallar, a large rod stood in the middle of the Vi-place. A awesomely big wooden rod who was enthroned up with lots of hacks and signs in the trunk. Love saw the sun signs, rounds, tokens of Ull, tokens of Njård Also of the fruitfulness god Ing with stalls had been carved in the stem. The love-goddess Lofn had been carved into a holy place near the top of the rod and was painted with red-ochra. A band of white chalk-paint had been painted below while the stem gave a blue-grey appearance.

Ingolf deemed the Rod to be thirty feet. "Then we have bigger Rods at home in Roden," he said.

"We are not here to compare, my good Ingolf," said Love sourly, then more thoughtfully, "we are here to worship."

"Sure, sure," said Ingolf, slightly hurt.

Greite told the Rod-land was between two hundars and was built as a Viplace for two tribes. The Roden was both the border and sign of friendship between the two villages.

The Rosers walked on to the Viplace. The crowd grew larger, and it became narrower as they neared the large Rod. The sun wagon was already set up behind the Rod and to the left of the holy causeway stood three of the five lur-pairs. On the right side stood the other two, that were a middle-sized handset and the large lur.

Behind the walls sat thirteen drummers. The drummers stood up on the sign of the Vigydja. They stood in a ring along the causeway dike and began to drum. Love knew a couple of the drummers. They had met earlier that day. The tense deer skins rattled when the drummers struck. The beat, the thump, took hold quickly.

The Vigydyan, tall, dark blond, with golden rings three times around both her right and left arm and wearing a short yellow serk, raised her hands and asked whisk. The Vigydjan stood on the Balkåkra-wagon. In front of her she had the Hopt that two Gothis had tied to mark a border for the kinsmen, who stood as close they could and almost touched the wheels of the Balkåkra-trolley. When the whisk spread the Vigydjan began to talk.

“Mine Friends, mine Vanirs, we have now gathered to worship time and sun with dancing until the sun says yes, that is turns over land line. Today many have heeded the call partake at this worship, we have friends from near and far, from Anglia, from Suffolk, Norfolk, from the Estonian kingdom, from the Latvian kingdom, from the Roden land. In the evening and during the night we shall play until the sun rises, the sun that always may shine upon us with all the glorworthyness that only the bright sun can bring. Brothers and Sisters! Let us, with the sun in our thoughts, come together in the song-worship of the sun that will forever warm us.

“We have asked the stars and they say that that very day is a day when song is heard everywhere. They have given their leave for this Feast and for the evening, we will see what they say to us. They will give us a sign during the night. A sign that you have never seen before. If the Feast goes along the old Sidr and if we swing the holy dance the stars will speak to us. It will only shed in the evening and no one else tonight. We are in full harmony with all the stars and their moves. We are with them and they are one with us,” stated the Vigydja and soughed thereafter in a song, alone and without help from any play-tool.

Her voice was strong and powerful and it carried over the landscape. The song about the Sun and that it may shine forever for all who took part. She sang loudly and bounced on the words, joking like the Saami people so that the words met each part of the hug. The kinsmen raised their hands towards her in worship to her song and as a sign of being together and that they belonged to the world.

After the song, a while of whisk. The Vigydja stood with her head bowed. Then she lifted her head and looked at the kinsmen and said with a clear and steady voice, “Sisters and brothers, sing this song! Fiddlers, play! Drum! My dear drummers! Lur-blowers, blow loud and long! Strike the Balkåkra-gong, that you may give the holy sign for the worship to begin!”

The clear sound of the Balkåkra-gong echoed through Rodeskilde. After the gong’s sound had slowly ebbed, the drums began to be heard. The bronze-lurs blew like a storm all night. The folk stomped the beat and clapped their hands. More and more folk gathered around the Rod to dance. The Gothis walked around the dancers with the Hopt and that way surrounded the dancers. The Gothis ruled thus tightness in the dance with the Hopt. The swingers danced. The Rosers took part and danced along with everyone else. Ingolf and Greite danced together. They were almost crushed in the crowd. They were pushed together, which they did not mind. Karla blinked to Love and said that Ingolf seemed to be in love and Love replied that it was true. Karla smiled in response and kept on swinging.

The dance carried on for a long, long time. All could not swing all the time and went to rest. The Drummers were sometimes replaced. The bronze-lur blowers had the toughest task because they had to carry the lurs at the same time. They blew in turns and sometimes got help holding the handset from a kinsman. The dance became more and more heated and some of the folks came into a dance trance.

They changed ham and took another shape; they became birds, horses, pigs or any other animal or even another creature or maybe a plant.

So far the folk took only friendly hams and frithur was kept. The Gothis who steered the Hopt to get the best tightness. People felt awesome. The dancers bounced around for hours. Some seemed to be able to dance forever. Others gave up after a few hours and went to rest. The drums rolled on and let the magical beats slither away in the air.

Some dancers were caught up in the thumping drum sound and seemed to be elsewhere. A pair of dancers gave roars during their trance and seemed to have changed their mind. Ingolf and Greite were still in the Hopt-ring. Visten, Maren and Love had given up and were outside and puffed out. Karla kept on as if she did not feel any tiredness. She waved to Love to carry on and make their way back into the Hopt. They kept on swinging. The sun had left them to wane underground and now it was time to dance until the sun was back. If they failed, it would be a great loss that many would talk about a long time so all had to dance for a long time.

Love did not feel tired. Her legs still felt strong and she felt the luring swing-beats and the throbbing tones throughout her body. She began to feel the ham-dance that so many had spoken about but she had never felt herself before. Now the time had come.

Darkness was falling but had not quite come yet. The light lingered and did not really leave this magical evening when the dance reached new heights. The dance did not stop. The dancers just kept on swinging. The drums grew hot and the bronze-lurs was emptied of spit more than once. The Balkrakra-gong was sometimes hit. Sometimes there was a lonely flute whistling. There were a lot of bronze rattles. The sun had gone to bed.

Love knew that something had happened to her mind after the many hours of dancing. She did not really know where she was but she did not think it mattered. The swing could not be hindered. Karla moved in front of her and Love found it hard to look at the chin and cheeks of her ansyn. Love danced on. She swung her body in a sexy way and felt that she bumped into more and more people who danced around her. Sometimes she felt the Hopt in her back or maw. Love sensed that there were not so many people dancing any more and that it was becoming brighter. Love carried on spinning. She became more and more dazed and did not know where she was. She could not make out what was moving in front of her. Suddenly everything became fully bright. Something she could not understand shone and shone in front of her but she could not say what it was. The light just got bigger and bigger. The rays almost stung her eyes. She kept on swinging, wilder and wilder. She put her hands up to the light. The light carried on with the same power. Love had a sudden urge to jump and she jumped with all her power, straight forwards. Then everything went black. She remembered no more.

When she came to herself, Visten smiled to her and said, "Love, you've danced the sun back. The sun is back. Look at how the sun's rays are shining towards us. A very good omen. It will bring good luck."

Love looked around. The sun lifted slowly over land line and hit the darkness. The Vigydja stood again on the wagon with Balkakra-gong. The drums had stopped drumming, the bronze-lurs had stopped roaring. The flutes had fallen still. Only the Balkakra-gong's drilling gong-stroke swayed across Rodeskilde. The sun rose up again and life came back.

When the sun had risen fully, the gong beat ended. Rest. The tired out swingers lay back in the grass and drank mead and ale. Ingolf had left with Greite. Everyone rejoiced. They fell asleep on the grass, for the next day when they would go back to Noatun and keep on their sea-fare to Newgrange. They

hoped that Ingolf would come back before leaving the otherwise he would have a hard time getting back on his own.

Love felt tired and dazed after her ham-trip. Her legs ached but that was fine. She was pleased to have switched ham, perhaps only for a short while but still. The happening whetted her appetite and she wanted to do it again. She fell asleep quickly.

Love woke up. She looked around and saw that Visten was carrying her. They were heading towards Noatun and had already walked for a good time, for the sun was already high in the sky. Love stretched out her hand and swung it towards the Sun. Oh, she thought.

“Now you wake up,” said Roar.

“We’ve been taking turns to carry you. You slept so well and we didn’t want to wake you. Ingolf came back just before it was time to go and now we are on the road,” said Visten.

They walked the rest of the day and came to Noatun. No one had touched the boat and the bronze-lur was also untouched. Rodulf had gone ahead and made everything ready for the sea-fare. They rowed with the oars and came out onto the lake. The sea was calm and not a breeze was felt. They rowed to come around Seeland.

## Chapter 13 - GEIRWALD SEES IRMINSUL

The rowing boat had good speed downstream and they did not have to row so much. Kellner had said from the beginning that he did not want to row. If they needed to row, it was up to Geirwald and the rest. Kellner thought that rowing was not his task. To underline his statement he took one of the oars and broke it over his knee, then laughed uncontrollably at his prank and told Geirwald that Chief Walter would wait at the mouth of the river Lippe. With the help of the Lippe they would reach the river Ems and then follow it to the river Hase to follow that upstream to finally come to the river Weser.

They rowed past Rödesrath and one of the crew members said that the folk of Rödesrath and Soling were in battle with the newly built village Odenthal. In Odenthal they worshiped only Oden or Wotan and in Solingen they worshiped the sun. Geirwald understood that he was heading for the Vanir land. He would soon see all the holy places of worship, all the Weohs, all the groves, Hearnhs and maybe a Hof.

They rowed to Lippe without any hardship. The weather was good and no angry tribes showed up. They went past a couple of boats that were about to row up the river Rehn but no skirmishes took place. Geirwald thought life was quite good, apart from Kellner belching and farting all the time. A single fart could destroy someone's sense of smell. Geirwald had even dared to utter some small jokes about farting and told Kellner that if the river cannot send the boat forward by itself, they could set sails because of the wind they had already on board. Nobody understood the joke, luckily including Kellner himself.

As they rowed past the small town of Walsum, Kellner thundered that they were not far from the meeting place, something that everyone in the crew had already worked out when the sun was low. They eked their speed and came to the mouth of the Lippe. They rowed gently on the Lippe and saw that Chief Walter's men were camping on the right hand shore. Geirwald went to Chief Walter, who said, "You seem to have many lives, my fighter, that's good, Luck rides with you. We need luck. You carry with you the power of fate. Use the power in the right way, my warrior. It's good that you came to us now, as we've bought wares for the fare. Stocks have been replenished honestly. Well, almost. We traded food for one of the boats. It went so quickly that we managed to take too many boats. Now we have to go before they find out to the traded boats belong to the neighboring tribe. Then all hell will break lose," he giggled.

They boarded the boats again and began the fare up the river Lippe, which was not at all as easy as travelling with stream. It was easy enough to begin with but as time went by they met more and more water resistance and streams.

They passed the villages Wulfen and Ollerfen, where folk used to worship Oller, the Sun God Ull, but which had now been taken over by Wotan's followers. They rowed past Hamm but then the back-streams became too tough and Chief Walter gave orders that seven men on each side would pull the boats with ropes. The other men were quiet and followed orders. Geirwald thought it was nice to step on real ground again. Hradbart ended up on the other side in the other draught-team. Geirwald hated Hradbart. One day he would have the opportunity to get back at him, he did not know when, but one day. Hradbart did not kill him before then. But then he would get some hard punishment from Chief Walter, who did not want any needless loss of men.

After many days of rope-pulling they came to Lippstadt, which was not much of a town but in any case was now a larger village. They were not allowed to leave the boats. Chief Walter had agreed with Lippstadt's chief that his men would stay in the boats. For taking this vow they got fresh water, dried fish and were told how to get to Rietberg in order to find the river Ems. Chief Walter traded a sword and a couple of bronze-bits for two wagons from the Lippstadt chiefs, on which they could haul the boats the scant mile to the River. Geirwald reckoned it was about thirty thousand feet away. With the wagons they would move much faster on the land. Chief Walter let Krigerdorfer and Kaisper stay behind as collateral so that the Lippstadt chief could be sure that nothing happened to his dearest wagons.

The road was not the best but they arrived without much hardship, especially as the Chief of Lippstadt sent a pathfinder to find the best route. It was not the first time that he had lent wagons against payment. Many boats and sometimes even larger ships had begun to come up and downstream with stolen loot and this way they could take a cut, laughed Lippstadt's Chief. When Chief Walter's group had gone, Lippstadt's folk feasted for a long time because they had regained the wagons and were rid of Kellner.

Geirwald and the others launched the boats and began the trek down to Weser along the River Ems. The river snaked its way through the landscape. He looked at the landscape. No people, no houses, no fires. Dreary, thought Geirwald, but maybe there was someone out there who could see them. Or maybe there were no spirits there. At least, not evil ones. Wotan had shielded them so far, anyway. The woods began to brighten, thought Geirwald and saw that there were not so many spruce trees as there were further south.

Without the spruce the woods were lighter. Geirwald saw more oak, birch, aspen, maple, rowan, ash, alder and linden. The number of linden trees enthralled Geirwald. He had heard that the Vanirs bound holy twigs of linden, winded branches. The Vanirs made wreaths, which they put on their holy Stallars.

As they fared further, the stream eked into the river Ems. They rowed past Reine. Geirwald could not understand why the place was called Reine when it was by the Ems. Reine should really be on the Rhine. Kriegerdorfer told them that Reine was linked with the worship of the goddess Nerthus, for the people here had once washed Nerthus with holy water. When they passed Reine everything looked empty. The village was empty. Kriegerdorfer said that the village had probably been raided by Wotan's followers, who burned everything and everybody who had another troth. Much like they would do with the Vanirs, when they got hold of them, thought Geirwald and shuddered, horrified, at the thought. But he sat still and showed no sign of pity. He could not show weakness. He could not show pity.

They rowed slowly past Walkum, where villagers waved at them as they went by. Kriegerdorfer had heard that there was a village called Wahn nearby and said they could plunder it but got a wallop by Chief Walter, who said Kriegerdorfer should keep quiet until they came to Friesland or the land of the Danes. He pointed out to Kriegerdorfer that Wahn certainly was Vanir and they worshiped the sun instead of Wotan but these nearby Vanir villages had already been booked by other Aesir chiefs. They had planned their rape and plunder raids and if they found out that Chief Walter had taken some goods it would not be easy to put it right. They would chop up Chief Walter, fry him over open fire and grab all the loot from his raid.

They rowed down the river Weser. A few days later they glimpsed a bay, Weser Creek. The waters became wider and wider. Geirwald got the feeling that they had come into the foe land. He thought of the eyes that watched him from the wooded shore sides.

They had now reached the Saxon land. The Saxons were known for their sense of order and new thinking. They could make wonderful ships and overwhelming rods of wood. They were a seafaring people and together with the Angles and the Danes the Saxon had travelled to many lands.

Chief Walter signed to his men to halt. He had caught sight of the village Brake lying across a narrow half-island. He gave an order to steer slowly ashore and pull up the boats. They went up into the dwindling woods, took out their swords and spears and began the march to the Rod-place where the pillar of the world, the renowned Rod Irminsul, stood. But first they must pass the village Brakebyrn, not far from Heresburg, without being caught.

Geirwald had heard a lot of talk about Irminsul, the Rod in the middle of the world, that is the bridge between earth and heaven, the link between people and the goddesses. The world Rod held up the world. Irminsul was the most known Rod in the Vanir and Asa lands. Irminsul was a token of the World-tree, Yggdrasil, and was also called Jömunr. Every family had its own family-tree. The tree was a sign for a long life and of the kin that took over after the kin that left.

They walked briskly up the slope and through the linden-woods. Far away they could hear the clatter of the village as its folk made food. No one saw when they went by. They went quietly. After another mile they came to a great open space. The place was ruled by stillness. From the woods they could see the huge open area and out over the Weser bay.

First they saw nothing. Irminsul was simply so big that they did not see it. A giant rod ruled over the middle of the place. Around it were a number of stone Stallars on which were placed berries, fruit and porridge. On the Stallar to the south was a richly carved golden ring.

The Stallar was quite small, thought Geirwald. He had imagined these to be much larger. They were maybe three by three feet and three feet high.

They crept up to the Stallar and helped themselves to berries, fruit and porridge. Geirwald looked up. He could barely see the top of the Rod without getting sun in his eyes. The Irminsul had been crafted from a huge, huge tree trunk. Geirwald could not make up his mind whether the wooden stem was made of oak or another wood but the tree's thickness at its base meant that he guessed oak. The width of the bottom of the trunk must be at least two fathoms, he thought to himself. The stead was awesome and gave a feeling of calm, stillness and hush, whilst the fields around Irminsul were overwhelmingly handsome. Irminsul was so big, wide and high at the same time.

Geirwald had almost lost himself in his thoughts when a Irminsul-gydja came running and tried to defend the gold ring that lay on the Stallar. Hradbart had picked up the ring and held it above his head, screaming with delight. Evidently the cry had attracted the Irminsul-gydja who now came to the save the ring. She screamed something. Geirwald could not understand her tongue. Some bits of the language he understood, but not much. He understood that she was angry, but what could she do alone against thirty men?

The tall Gydja with dark brown hair and a yellow kirtle with signs sewn into it rushed straight at Hradbart and butted him in the side. Hradbart was so surprised that he dropped the ring, which was picked up by Kaisper, who stood nearby and ran off to the woods as fast as his hairy legs could carry him.

Chief Walter ordered retreat. Hradbart stood up, furious. The Irminsul-gydja had come to her feet and screamed hellishly to Hradbart, who was furious. He threw her down on the ground and beat her with his fists. She cringed. He continued to beat her with rage. He grabbed her by her long hair and dragged



her around on the ground. She tried to defend herself but only managed only to hit his back. He gave her a couple of raw sweeps in the stomach so she doubled up. When she fainted he took her by the arm and pulled her into the woods.

“The bitch will wake the others in Brakebyn. We must either kill her on the spot or take her and make her shut up,” screamed Hradbart to Chief Walter, who resolutely pressed a rag into her mouth. Geirwald saw her scared eyes, which said, “How can you do this? How can you un-worship a holy stead in this way? How can you steal the sun god Ull’s ring? This will stop the sun coming back and we will all die of the Fimbul-winter, the everlasting winter.”

Chief Walter pointed southwards and the small army turned back from where they had come. They ran gently through the woods. They ran for a long time. Hradbart was angry at the Gydja, who could not keep pace with him and drew his dagger. Kriegerdorfer stopped him.

“Hey meekster, you know the Chief Walter’s orders. No uncalled for bloodshed. Do you understand?”

Hradbart nodded and looked around. He found a large, old beech tree.

“Kriegerdorfer, help me to tie her so that she cannot run away, if I don’t run the dagger through her Vanir heart.”

Kriegerdorfer nodded and tore off her yellow kirtle with a jerk. The Irminsul-gydja tried to break free but Hradbart gave her another blow with his fist and more blood flowed over her chin and down her naked body. Kriegerdorfer tore her kirtle into strips. Then they laced the strips around her wrists and ankles and pulled them round the beech. Hradbart tied a strip around her neck so that she would not rush to get loose. They pulled so that her arms were wrapped around the beech-tree. Kriegerdorfer tied her legs in the same way.

“It will probably take a day to loosen the knots,” said Kriegerdorfer and laughed. The Irminsul gydja looked worriedly at the two men. The blood-flow from her mouth had somewhat calmed. Hradbart and Kriegerdorfer checked the knots again and then went off into the woods. After a few steps Hradbart halted.

“Run, I will come soon,” said Hradbart to Kriegerdorfer and returned to the bound Irminsul-gydja.

“Don’t do anything stupid,” shouted Kriegerdorfer back as he continued to run to catch up with the others.

“Don’t worry, I’ll be quick. I just have to leave my mark so that the Vanirs will recall what to believe in,” said Hradbart and drew up his dagger as he smirked.

The Irminsul gydja looked with fear at Hradbart, who approached her with his dagger drawn. “Keep quiet and you will live, you asshole, despite what you did. But you will get a small memory.”

With a practiced hand, Hradbart carved a spear on the Irminsul gydja’s right thigh. Not deeply but just enough to become a scar. An upside down triangle and a line straight down. He had carved *Geir*, the sign of the spear. Not a sound came from the Irminsul gydja. She just looked at him with great hatred. The drops of blood trickled slowly down her right thigh. He stood a little while, enjoying his creation. Then he ran off. He ran like a mad man to catch up with the others.

Everybody was already in the boats when Hradbart came panting and he got a clout by in the oar that Kriegerdorfer held. “It was lucky that it did not take longer. But then it’s always quick with you,” said

Kriegerdorfer and everyone laughed. Hradbart glared hatefully at Kriegerdorfer when he took his place at the oars.

They rowed quickly to the other side and then eked out to Weser bay. Chief Walter had made a rapid breakdown of the possibility of passing Brakeby and the long, narrow island and compared it to that of entering the river Wymme's left bowel and then coming over to the river Lune. He deemed to take a risk and hoped that the river had not been groomed with sharpened poles on the bottom of the lake. They rowed with all their might when arrived at the long, narrow island; there were no piles in the strait next to the island but they would not could get by without hardship. They heard the Brakeby folk call to them. They had probably not yet understood what was happening. A pair of canoes set out after them but it was not long until Chief Walter's asaband came by. The canoes gave up the chase after a couple of miles.

Chief Walter deemed to fare straight towards the northern Fries lands. He did not want to meet the Angles, who were known to be stubborn fighters. The Vanirs were full of new thoughts and knew how to hit back. Oh no, it would be easier to steal from the Friesians, thought Chief Walter. The Friesians were wealthy. Large wealth was also to be found among the Danes and in northern Friesland. The sea-fare to the land of the Danes was short.

They came out onto the open sea. Many of the men were frightened by the sight of the vast sea. It was the first time they had seen it. Some just sat with their mouths open. Kellner's jaw had dropped. At least that was what Geirwald thought; he could not really distinguish Kellner's mouth from his chin, cheeks and boils. On the other hand, no other man could distinguish Kellner's face anyway. The sight of the sea stunned the rape and plunder band .

Only Chief Walter, Geirwald and a couple of the other men could swim and this made Chief Walter worried. He behested a return to the coast to keep close to the coastal strip. For a while, Chief Walter thought about leaving the boats but this would mean marching by foot and to go by foot took a long time. A very long time. And now that they had been forced to leave the horses it would not be possible to carry goods and gold. Chief Walter longed, however, to land. He did not like water. He felt that he could not master the water in the same way that he mastered the land.

They passed the villages of Midlum and Lackawanna. Geirwald understood that they had come to the river Elbe. They followed the river further inwards to avoid so much open water, as the men got chills when they got too far from shore.

At the small town of Hörne, Geirwald saw that the Vanir power began with the goddess Hörn's Stallar. Hörn or Härn was the goddess of growth. At all sites, places, towns and so on where there was a Stall of Härn, everything in the neighbourhood was called something linked Hörn- or Härn. This is the way it had been for many, many, many years. The Asaband turned its prow northwards and crossed to the other side of the Elbe.

## Chapter 14 - GEIRWARD VISITS THE NORTH FRISIAN ISLANDS

On the other side of the Elbe, the landscape was overwhelmingly handsome. Geirwald was dazzled by its beauty and how it looked so plentiful. He peered out to sea, the North Sea, and saw a couple of nearby islands. Chief Walter described Helgoland, the Holy Land, where according to legend there were many Stallars and golden rings. But to get to Helgoland was to take a great risk and Chief Walters's men could not sail, row in heavy seas or master the sea. No, Helgoland would have to wait. It felt safer to plunder along the coast and inland, on solid ground. They made their way slowly along the beach around the Schwienskopp headland and came into the bay. There they saw fire from camps and waited before they carried on forward. Chief Walter had got word that there would be rich villages around here and they needed food and fresh water.

Hradbart had caught a shepherd and with heavy punches had made him to tell where the village Wöhrden was. The frightened shepherd became even more scared when Kellner turned up and made the mistake of smiling. He fainted and they had to wake him with cold water. Hradbart mumbled something about unnecessary work.

They demanded to know about where the farms were and they chose one that lay far away. Then they rowed near the village Wöhrden and attacked the chosen farm. Only three elderly women were in the yard and they could not stop Chiefs Walter's men from taking whatever they wanted. They hastily ate the groats in earthen vessels that were set up, cut down the deer meat that hung salted in the storage hut, drank from the fresh water jars, ate the dried fish, grabbed the fishing tools, screamed and went around tearing and ripping and were about to leave the place when Kaisper spotted one of the older women. Kaisper had become so horny without women for such a long time that he decided to rape her. The others did not see that Kaisper stayed in the village and he tore off the old Wöhrwoman's clothing. She screamed out loud and her grey hair whitened with fear of what was about to happen. Kaisper gave a raw laugh, pulled off her clothes and began attempts to enter the old woman. He pulled her down to the ground and lay over her. The old lady gave in due to his weight. He lifted his serk and his dick swelled. He began to sting her. She screamed. He laughed. One of the two other women came rushing from the woods where she had hidden during the looting. She saw her friend's whereabouts and how she struggled and tried to resist.

The woman rushed to her plundered home and gripped a barbed fishing harpoon and took the kit and ran straight ahead with fishing harpoon pointed at Kaisper, who lay with his naked bottom sticking straight up in the air. It was a big target and with full force she drove the fishing tool into his buttocks. He screamed out loud, jumped up and dropped everything he had in his hands. He brought his hands to his wounded buttocks and tried to get the fishing harpoon out but it did not work. He screamed again. The now white-haired woman rolled away and the other Wöhrhag grabbed a hawthorn bush as a shield and neared Kaisper. Kaisper understood that his already bad situation could quickly become even worse. He tried to turn and run away but the fishing harpoon sat where it sat and he felt a heinous pain in his bottom. He jumped and hobbled by turns. The Blood flowed down his hairy thighs. He had to rush to get to the boats. When he got there, Kellner laughed so that his entire fat belly quivered. Kaisper had to lie on his stomach in the middle of the boat and Geirwald and another man had to coax out the barbs one by one. Kaisper screamed like a stuck cow. The whole army laughed hard and Hradbart told Kaisper he had got it completely wrong: He should not fuck old hags but young girls. If only he tried, he would soon find out the difference.

Everyone laughed rawly and for a long time. Kaisper could not sit for many days and his role as leader had suffered a hefty blow. Kellner said that not even the boils on his bottom looked as terrible as Kaisper's badly mangled behind. This quoth was told among the men for a long time.

Could Kellner's boils really be that ugly? Many of raiders wanted to bet but no one had the guts to knock Kellner over so they could see them and compare them with Kaisper's sore behind. That comparison would have to wait.

Geirwald loved the Frisian landscape. He was stunned. The freedom of the sea. To be able to see so far. Far away he saw the island Sylt. Sand,sand,sand along the beach. Geirwald wanted to stretch out and sleep on the sandy beach, to be at a standstill. Stillness, sun, Warmth. A woman by his side. He daydreamed.

## Chapter 15 - LOVE AND GEIRWALD MEET

Chief Walter wanted to gain more knowledge about their whereabouts and what they should do next so he sent Geirwald, Kriegerdorfer and Hradbart on horseback to find out where the rich Stallars were and which villages would be easy to plunder. They stole three horses from a village not far from Wöhr and the three men left. Geirwald got orders to follow the coastline westwards, Kreigerdorfer would ride straight into the country and Hradbart would head eastwards along the coast.

Geirwald jumped onto the big, strong, brown horse, dug in his heels and set off at a gallop. He trotted quickly towards the coast and kept a good pace. The horse was fresh and strong and he drove it hard.

Geirwald had learned to ride early on and had a good hand with horses. He treated them with kindness, not evil as his father had done. When he and the horse ran through the fields he felt he was linked to the horse, that he could trust it and that it would not prance or jerk or do anything else uncalled for. He kept on riding along North Frisland and rode by the villages of Husum, Hat Norderstedt and Högel. Geirwald thought about the name Hatt Stedt and thought how it felt familiar. He thought for some time and thought that the name could have come from the Hallstatt culture area. He liked having the knowledge that his culture penetrated further north. Soon, it would triumph all over the world. Wotan would take over on all fronts, in all towns, all villages. Wotan would rule forever. Everything would belong to Wotan. He especially liked that there was now a day that belonged to Wotan: Wotansdag, Odensdag, Wednesday, the middle day. Before, Wednesday had been used for weddings. Not any more. Rightly so, he pondered.

Geirwald enjoyed his wild galloping. He felt himself to be the spearhead of his culture. He would convert the Vanirs to become faithful to his gods. If they would not, he and Chief Walter's men would kill them. With the help of the horse he trotted far into the land of the Vanirs. Far away he sometimes caught a glimpse of villages or small farms that were spread out across the landscape. The weather held up and the sun peered out from time to time. He rode for a long time and when he reached Lindholm, a small inland village, he stopped to rest, which was needed both for him and his steed. Geirwald took care not to get too close to the village and thus raise worries. He found that life in the village seemed to be quiet and orderly. He did not, however, become aware of any valuables and deemed therefore to carry on riding northwards.

Early at dawn the next day he sat up and continued his fare northwards. He turned westwards and came to the beach. Then he saw the half-island Sylt again. He was allured by the plentiful handsomeness of the landscape and let his eyes follow Sylt's beautiful sandy beaches. Geirwald dug his heels in the horse's flanks and rode quickly towards the small strip of beach that linked Sylt to the mainland. At a fast trot, he crossed the foreshore.

Many times the water was so high that it came up to the horse's stomach. After some wading and slow trotting, Geirwald came to the island's middle. He pulled on the reins and headed southwards, towards the goddess Hörn's Stallar. He trotted on and soon he saw the thousand ell long holy causeway. Before he began to ride beside the causeway he saw the very small Settra-house that lay at the ingong to the holy causeway.

Geirwald swerved keep his horse from stepping onto the holy causeway. He did not want to get a curse from the evil powers or beings by desecrating the causeway. Geirwald brought the horse to the side and let it run alongside the Holy causeway. Its hooves clattered on the ground when he eked the speed. He neared the Stallar and saw two women talking at the Holy Stone. Geirwald also saw three shining

golden rings lying on the Stallar. He twitched with hunger for the gold. So big were the golden rings. So brilliant, so brilliant. He brought the horse in a bow towards the Stallar and got off.

Two women, Love and Bura, stood in front of the Stallar as if to shield it. They did not yet know if the man came with evil or good will. Love felt that something was different. The man was not dressed as he should be. He had clothes akin to those of the Æsir. Before Love had time to end her thought, Bura took her hand and stood ready to shield the Stallar and the golden rings.

Geirwald saw that the two women were getting ready to fight for their holy things. He took out his sword, meaning to cleave the women in half if they fought. He walked slowly. Then he saw Love. He had never seen a more handsome woman in his life.

Here she stood, the world's most handsome woman, in front of him. She shone with self-assurance and trust. She glowed with beauty. The sun that shone out to sea highlighted her blonde hair from behind and gave her the uttermost loveliness and prettiness. Geirwald halted, stunned by her overwhelming loveliness. He put back his sword in its sheath and stopped two feet in front of the women. He said nothing.

Love looked at the man. She did not know what she could do. He undoubtedly had evil thoughts. He was an Æse. However, he had come alone for some reason she did not understand. Love watched him but said nothing. They stood like that for a long while. Love could not resist. She thought she had to do something so she smiled at the man.

Geirwald saw that the woman smiled at him. He was warm in his whole body. Geirwald got a feeling that struck like a lightning. He did not know what had happened but something had happened, something had changed. Geirwald felt great allured to the blonde woman in front of him. He smiled back and felt for the first time in a long time a great joy. The heat spread again in his body.

Love stood before him, stretched out her hands and split her fingers. She called to the sun god Ull so that he would send his strongest megi. She then took Bura's hand and mumbled the seid songs, the galders and the sagas as they walked around the Stallar.

Geirwald understood that Love had magical powers. She could call thunder and lightning. She was able to master everything. She was cunning in the seid. She might be a Völva, a Seidkonur or a Visendakona. With the force of the seid she could crush him and all the raiders.

Love went on to sing loudly and strongly. They danced three laps around the Stallar. Love then stretched out her hand as a sign for the man to sit down. Geirwald felt her magic power and had to sit down. The Megi was everywhere. She wore the strength and the knowledge of the holy power. He sat cross-legged and looked forwards.

"I am Love, the Vigydja of the Roser tribe. This is Bura of Föhr's kin. Who are you and what do you want?" asked Love sternly. Geirwald did not quite understand what the woman was saying but he thought that she was telling him her name and her origin so he replied in the same way.

"I am Geirwald from Hallstatt. We have come to..." Geirwald stopped. He did not know what to say. He cleared his throat and looked forwards. "Uh. We have come here," he said finally.

Love had learned some of Æsir tongues from her mother Leufsta, the Hofgydja, so she knew quite well what Geirwald had backed out of saying himself. "Look into my eyes," she said admonishingly and stared straight into Geirwald's eyes. Love used words that she knew he would understand.

“Look me in the eye,” Love repeated, shaking her head slowly. “You know the Megi of the goddess Hörn. You are sitting at her Stallar. You feel that you must obey her wishes. You know the Megi of the goddess Hörn. You are sitting at her Stallar. You are sitting in a holy place. Your whole body is filled by her will and her power.” Love spoke slowly and clearly, in a low tone. The whole time she stared into Geirwald’s eyes. Her upper body swayed back and forth. Geirwald drowned in her eyes. He was enchanted, entranced. He felt that he could not move a muscle. He no longer had power over his limbs. He was in a daze that he had never felt before. Geirwald’s level of awareness changed and he fell into a daze.

After a while Love and Bura saw how Geirwald had fallen into a dazing sleep “What did you do?” asked Bura, astonished. “What a show. What Megi do you know? How often do you do this? Do you have this power over many? You must be a very highly ranked Vigydja.”

Love did not answer but went to the horse and tied it to a branch. Then she slowly pulled out the sword from its sheath, went far away along the shore and flung the sword into the sea. When she came back Bura asked why she had thrown the sword into the lake.

“Bura,” said Love, “the sword is an Æsir token. A sign of fighting and plunder. When the smithies in Hallstatt crafted this sword, they also crafted war or at least a tool of war. The sword changes the way things are and takes power from us Vanirs. We, the Vanirs, we talk, while the Æsirs talk with the sword. The power is always right, or claims to be right, and it is always the power that tells the history in the future. It is always the power that deems what will be told in the future. The sword is our enemy. The sword cuts our roots. The sword cuts down our holy trees. The sword makes unhealable wounds the landscape. The sword cuts our hug. The sword cuts each of us off from the whole. So it is and so it will be until the next breakthrough takes over from the sword. That day will come too, but it takes time. Speech wins over the sword but it takes time and the greatest thoughts have to free. Fully free. No one should hinder the free thinking. As long as free speech is free there will be happiness on earth but when speech is cut by the sword then evil and disaster will come and people will become each other's slaves.

“Everything is repeated, everything goes in waves. Winter becomes summer, summer becomes winter. History comes back. What once fled will come again and with new power. The strong power of growth will highlight the values that we have today sometime in the future.”

Bura listened carefully. She worshiped Love’s cunningness and enjoyed meeting Love. It seemed that everything really was how Love said. Bura watched Geirwald, who did not move. He sat fully still and looked straight ahead. Geirwald was in ninth heaven.

Nine was the lucky number of the Vanirs. After nine moons there will be a baby, she thought and mused what her mother had taught her.

Love saw Noatun stride towards the shore. Bura waved to the Rosers to board at the edge of the half-island. Bura knew the beach and knew where each reef was. Love signed to the crew to keep quiet, not to wake Geirwald from his daze. Love told Bura that she, Love, an allowed Vigydja, was taking on the answer of bringing the three golden rings from the Stallar to a safer place. Love went three laps around the Stallar, bare-breasted, and lifted the three golden rings. Then she put them down on the ground and put both palms next to them. A while of stillness followed, and then she picked up the three rings and boarded Noatun. Love put the golden rings in the stern under the thwart after singing a fare-seid that kept the Megi of the golden rings and begged again forgiveness from the Goddess Hörn for taking the golden rings away from the Stallar. Bura climbed on board Noatun and the Rosers were ready to sail away.

Love went to Geirwald. Although he was an Æse, she liked him. He looked good, she thought. She bent down and whispered in his ear that he should wake up from the entrallment when the sun sank. Then he would take his horse and go back to where he had come from. Without anyone seeing, she lay a beautiful ground stone in his hand and closed the hand round it.

Love also thought about the saga about the god of the sea, Njord (grown -up from Njård, Nerthus) and his love for Skade, daughter of the Giant Trymheim. Njord from the Anglo-Saxon Scandinavian culture and Skade from the Shamanistic Lappish culture flirted and made love and decided to live together. First they would stay nine days in the mountains, then nine days at the seaside home of Njord called Noatun. That is why the ship is called Noatun, Love thought and smiled.

She kept on thinking. Njord and Skade fared back and forth but one day when Njord came from the mountains to Noatun, he quothed:

"Hateful for me are the high barrows in the north,  
I was not long there,  
only nine nights.  
The howling of the wolves  
sounded ugly to me  
after the song of the swans."  
Skade answered:  
" I could not Sleep  
on the sea beds  
for the screeching of the bird.  
That gull wakes me  
when from the wide sea  
he comes each morning."

She also remembered that Njord had two children, Frej and Freja. Could they be the offspring of the love between Skade and Njord?

Love returned to the shore and the ship Noatun headed out into the Wadden Sea in the headway of the Foehr.

Geirwald slowly awoke from the magic sleep. The sun was going down. He felt himself awfully tired in his whole body, as if he had run many thousand yards. He could not recall much. He only recalled the windsomely handsome woman. She had said that she was called Love and she was from the Roser tribe. Was it all a dream or did he really meet her? Geirwald opened his closed hand, where there lay the pretty ground stone. The stone was yellow, shimmering and had a smooth, almost soft surface that seemed to smile at him. He stood up slowly. He was still dizzy. The horse, which was tied to a tree, brayed.

Geirwald walked slowly towards the horse. He untied the knot at the branch and sat up and rode back the way he had come. He rode almost without knowing if he rode or not and he still had trouble knowing what was real life and what was a dream world. Again and again he saw Love's ansyn in front of him. Was she alive? Had he met her, Love, or he had only dreamed it?



The stone, the beautiful stone that he had left, was real. The stone was proof. Something inside him told him that Love had given him the stone as a token. But he did not know. Geirwald rode for two days and came back to Chief Walter's camp.

Chief Walter scolded him because he could not give any tidings. Chief Walter had been very angry when Geirwald had told him that he had no memories of the trip but had ridden all the time in a daze or haze. Hradbart had many more things to tell. He had found thriving Anglian villages that could give big loot. The villages were not guarded. You just had to go and get it, as Hradbart put it.

Chief Walter behested a march. The army began to walk and they followed the river Eider a while and then the river Treene. They passed Wohlde and Jybäck and then arranged themselves into an attack position against Husby, a small but rich village.

## Chapter 16 - LOVE TAKES PART IN THE TEEMING IN KNOWTH

Bura took the rudder and steered Noatun towards the island of Foehr. They had a following wind and the sail gave good speed. Soon they had rounded Foehr and came to Wyk, Buras home village. Many villagers had already gathered to greet the guests. Bura waved to her kinsmen from the stern.

When Noatun pulled up and moored, the Rosers were greeted by Bura's mother and father, who brought all the guests up to their longhouse. The Rosers were well fed and given good ale to drink. Bura told them about meeting Geirwald the warrior and Bura's father, Godnur, shook his head and said he was very worried about times to come .

"The Aesir raids are getting wilder and wilder. They come with weapons in their hands and grab everything they can get hold of. They make offerings to their war gods Mercurius and Wotan and always want more blood.

"Most likely, we must also take up arms. But where can we get these from and how can we learn how to fight? We, the Vanirs, have never kept on with war and battle. We have lived in frithur for thousands of years until now, suddenly, there is war and squabbling. What will happen now?" asked Godnur, shaking his head again.

Love saw the many May-poles standing in front of the newly built houses and animal barns. Love asked if the Frisians also danced around the Maypole. Godnur answered that the Frisians loved to dance in rings.

First they would dance around the Maypole and then the May-pole was put in front of a new building to give the building good luck and happiness in the future. "And then there's the Whitsun-tide, when the girls pick Whitsun-flowers to put in their hair. The girls walk in a feast-tow wearing all their flowers. Sometimes a Whitsun-gydja and a Whitsun-gothi are chosen, who bear the finest flowers and ride to the chosen farm, from where the gothi and the gydja come. There a feast begins, when every Burskip family with awe holds a feast and each Bur or neighbour has to help with food and drink," told Gudnor.

"And I almost forgot the game "fierljeppen"," said Gudnor, smiling. "You have to jump or punt over a ditch filled with water with a pole. The jumper has to run with a pole, stick it in the middle of the ditch and jump. At the same time the jumper tries to climb as high as possible. If you do it wrong you end up in the water," he laughed.

"Fierljeppen amuses many and we think it is fun and thrilling," Bura told Love, who made some rhymes and used other means to remember all she was told.

Love checked the surroundings carefully and rejoiced at the good order that ruled. She asked why the order was so good and Godnur told her that frithur between the neighbours plays a very weighty role for the Frisians and thus there was also a high demand for good order.

The evening ended and the Rosers were given straw beds at Bura's father's house. They slept well, full and happy aside from Roar, who had been unlucky at the punt with the pole . A wasp had found his weak spot and stung him in his "brown eye". He had probably slipped and hit the wasp's nest before the jump and thus disturbed the wasps. After a wild war –dance, Bura's mother had bathed him with boiled leaves from the flower Lady's mantle. Thereafter Roar had to sleep on his maw.

The next day they set out at dawn. They wanted to get away for they felt they had to hurry. If the weather became bad the Rosers could be sitting many days without being able to do anything. Godnur helped Rodulf with the headway and Godnur told them about the land of the Saxons and Angles. Godnur showed them Helgoland so Rodulf would have a benchmark when they fared through the Wadden Sea. Godnur also talked about the West Frisian and East Frisian Islands. If they got bad weather, they should be sure to seek a harbour and send his, Godnur's, greetings.

Noatun made good speed and they had Helgoland in sight all the time as they made their way around the bay. Luck stayed on the Rosers' side and they crossed the lengthy sea-miles with no further mishap. Oddly, Ingolf cut his thumb with a sharp bit of flint and there was much blood flow but otherwise not much happened. They had plenty of storage room, which had now been filled abundantly by the kind Frisians.

They sailed and rowed past a stunning archipelago with many small, sandy islands. They saw that on the low plains lived people in villages a little further inland, on firmer ground. After a few more days' fare they saw that the coast became higher and steeper again.

Rodulf announced that they could now see England, albeit far away, and they would soon make themselves ready for the crossing. Love felt it was as good to begin the crossing as soon as possible given that the weather Goddesses may not always be as kind as they had been on their fare so far.

They had got about half way across the strait when the weather changed. The ship Noatun tossed to and fro, back and forth. The waves grew higher and higher and sometimes they swilled over board. They shrank the sail area but had tailwind and therefore could sail straight forward.

Ingolf was heavily seasick and hung over the starboard side, shouting that he would die, which no one believed. However, it was when Ingolf spewed in Karla's pot of resin and pig tusks that drew the best laughs. Ingolf did not laugh, nor did Karla who, grunting, cleaned Ingolf's Frisian meal from the bore tusks.

Roar told them upliftingly that he could see the white cliffs and that Noatun was nearing England, the land of the Angles. Rodulf headed up the coast. The strong winds had faded and the weather became better.

They fared by the village with a Stallar, Folkestone, and then past Sandgate. Rodulf took out the headway for the next mark, which seemed further away round the bay. Two rich rocks that laid next to each other: Littlestone on Sea and Great Stone on Sea. They rounded Dungeness and rowed towards Hastings. Rodulf told Love that he had fared along the English coast many times before. He had always been well met and the Angles and the Saxons had seen to it that his stores were refilled.

When they came to Seaford and pulled Noatun up onto the smooth beach and waded ashore to replenish fresh water, they soon met a couple of Anglian women who were about to take up water from a well and they offered to help. They lowered their vessels on a rope and then pulled up the fresh, clean water. They asked the Rosers where they were going and the Rosers replied that they were going to Dowth, Knowth and Newgrange. One of them said suddenly, "You need to take on board O'Rian. He wants to go home. He comes from Dowth and has worked at at Sillbury Hill. Now he lives with us but he wants to go back to Dowth."

"Does he know how to fare at sea?" asked Rodulf.

"O'Rian is a good seaman," said the old women in one breath.

“Done,” said Love and looked at Rodulf.

The women told the Rosers to go back to Noatun and they would bring O’Rian.

Later that day the older women brought a young man called O’Rian. Love looked at O’Rian and liked him at first sight. He had red hair, light freckles and very white skin. He was tall and had nice shoulders with sexy muscles rippling along his arms. His chin was sharp and his teeth were white and bright. A goody, Love thought and looked at Karla, who smiled back.

Rodulf told O’Rian to grip an oar and the Rosers said goodbye to the women. The women wished them good luck on their trip and the Rosers set out to sea.

Love and Rodulf had agreed to fare at night too because every day and night was now important to reach Dowth, Knowth and Newgrange in time. Later that night they rowed past Hove, a place with a Hof. Hove had a fairly high rank in the Anglo-Saxon place-ranking but it was dark and late. Love thought it was a shame that they did not have more time for their fare. Many places remained unvisited. Love stated that one cannot do everything in this world. This last thought she found very un-fullfilling. Not having time to see everything in the world.

She remembered that she had become older. So said the elderly. When she had been younger there had been no hindrances. Anything could be done. Now the rest had to be done in the next life because everything goes in waves, everything is repeated, all life goes on and on, brooded Love.

The night came and Karla took O’Rian by the hand after many hours of rowing and led him to the fell here love slept. Karla stuffed him under the fell and O’Rian fell asleep at once. At dawn Rodulf cried out that they could see the Allowed island, the Isle of Wight. Love woke up and enjoyed the new sight of O’Rian in her bed. She touched his reddish hair with her hand and caressed his good-looking chin. O’Rian raised his head and they kissed. Good, he knows how to kiss. That is good, chuckled Love.

The Rosers rowed past Land’s End, Milford’s Head, Holyhead. From Holyhead at the Angles’ island there was a risky fare to Drogheda. O’Rian knew the reefs and the Islands and helped Rodulf to steer Noatun. O’Rian told stories about the knowledge of the stars and the buildings at Skara Brae, The Hill of Tara between Navan and Dunshaughlin, the Ceide fields, Kildare. O’Rian told them about “Tir na nog”, the “land of the youth” where the Goddesses Fand and his sister Li Ban, the Beauty of women, live. The land of pleasure, happiness and youth. Here, music, strength, life, and all pleasurable pursuits came together in a single place. Here happiness lasted forever; no one wanted for food or drink. Another name for it is the “Otherworld” the best land on earth, an island to the west of Ireland where the magic bylaws are taking place. You can go to “Tir na nog” over the sea, riding Embarr, the horse of Niamh.

Love thought about the Goddess Njörd and her holy island, where the bylaws took place, and the horse of Frey, Freyfaxe. Love also thought about the Ida valley that will bloom in times to come.

Love loved the wonderful times when O’Rian talked about the Irish bylaws and doings, with the sight of Ireland, the green island, coming closer.

The Rosers were lucky. The weather was good. They came into the river Boyne without any problems. Love loved the lush green trees that hung over the river. So green, such fresh air. With help from O’Rian with steering, the Rosers entered the river Boyne. Karla stood in the bow and showed her breasts to worship the River goddess Boann. She filled her lungs with the smell of the river Boyne and

was happy. Ingolf saw the shrine Knowth and they shored Noatun and went walking towards the wonderful Weoh of Knowth.

“Knowth is the shrine of times to come. The Weoh of fruitfulness,” said Love to the others. “Every year the Spring Eve is awed with the old bylaw of leading to Wigbed in order to have a child that will be born on the 21st of the Yulemonth, Samhan, that is the day of the Midwinter. The child that is born when the sun’s rays come into the hole in the Newgrange shrine and light up the tunnel and the end wall will be the leader of the tribe. The Sun and the stars will tell us who to crown as leader,” said O’Rian. Love held his hand tightly and looked at him.

“So all Twains make love this day, on the Spring Eve?” asked Maren, smiling.

“Yes, 81 Twains make love together with the stars and the sun and the moon at Imbolg. The Twains gather around the Knowth and touch the kerbstones. It brings good luck to have a child at the right time, to teem at the right time. To teem together, to have the child at the Midwinter solstice in the morning when the sunbeams reach in through the roofbox,” said Love.

“Ingolf, let’s do it,” said Maren and looked at Ingolf, who smiled back and pulled Maren closer to him.

“In Egypt, Sumer and in Babylonia they follow the stars, the Pleiades. These folks all know that some stars will move a little bit westward every day and night. The Egyptians love Sirius. The stars follow us and help us when we make love. They love it. They talk to us,” said Love and smiled at O’Rian. “We have the same bylaws all over the sea. When the 81 Twains all make love the stars are happy. The moon follows us women, we have our moon-blood, the blood of life. Women who have been together for a long time have their moon-blood at the same time in order to give birth at the right time,” she carried on. “Did you know that Uncle Höskuld worked in Egypt for nine years?” Love said to Karla.

“Did he?” asked Karla.

“Yes and he has much to tell.”

“My grandfather also worked at Abu Simbel,” said O’Rian. “He brought a lot of the knowledge to the Egyptians and he learned a lot too. The Pyramids were not built when Tara, Knowth, Dowth, the Ceide Fields and Newgrange were built. The Egyptians had great harvests, “Ars og frithur” for many years. The Faroes needed our skills and we helped them and we learnt a lot. The have some men who are really good at keeping track of the tales and the stars,” said O’Rian. O’Rian went on to tell about Kesh Cairn, Heapstone Cairn, Maeves Cairn, a barrow built to awe the wild queen Maeve and Conc na Riabh, meaning Hill of the stripes, built to keep track of the moon. O’Rian also told them about the Hag’s chair at Cairn in Carnbane. “It looks like a wigbed or rather a wig-stool,” he laughed.

O’Rian also told about the carving at Dromberg, in Cork, and the holy axe carved within the circle with two directions, Midwinter and Midsummer. Love said that it munned of the carvings in Oppeby. Like some of the carvings around Newgrange, she said.

“Ars og Frithur” said Rodulf.

O’Rian brought the Rosers to his kin and the starwatchers and the Gydyas, Brid and Sommerset. The Rosers were very welcome and Karla handed over two gifts to the Gydyas: the stone Mornir and the stone Völse from Fosie, not far from Ale stones. The Irish Gydyas gave a wooden red horse as a gift to Karla. It was the magic Embarr horse smeared with red-ochra.

O'Rian led the Rosers back to his kin's long-houses. "Let's stop talking. I'm getting horny," said Maren and pinched Ingolf in the forefront.

"Yes, let us get ready to make some offspring," said Love and smiled.

The Gydjas and the Gothis were ready to mark time. The headway Rods stood on the site and measured the sun's last rays. The Hofgydja Brid had been lifted up on a high seat so that everyone around could see her.

She let the sun shine through her split fingers as she held out her hand against the sunlight. Everyone stood up, ansyns turned towards the sunset.

Nine bone flutes sounded to help the Sun on its last spin of this turn. The people shaped their hands into a triangle to measure the Holy sun when it shone on the holy stone of Imbolg, the waning of the sun on Spring Eve. The sun glistened over carvings of the holy Stone. The Hofgydja Brid told that the sun had now decided to turn around and go down to rest. She spun one turn with her right hand outstretched. Then came a horse with a wagon that pulled the large sundisc. Its black side was shown to the people as a sign that the sun was going down and that the daylight hours would be fewer and fewer until the sun once again deemed to return at Yuletide or Samhain, when the sun Wheel would be used again. First the yellow side, the golden disc was shown at Spring Eve or Imbolg dawn. It was of mighty weight to worship the sun and make the earth fruitful and lush, because it was so important that the Teeming was fulfilled. The horse, which had been painted fully red with red ochre and covered with flowers, trotted around the holy Weoh. The wagon bar bore signs and carvings in the form of Sun Signs, rounds, zigzag patterns, spirals, four-sided boxes and rounds with seeds aptly in Mornir.

On the wagon a Lundagydjja was wearing a very sheer white robe. She steered the horse with smacks and words. Once the horse and wagon came around all viewers turned their eyes to the kerbstone. The last strong rays hit the waning-stone, almost drilling the time into the stone and loading it with megi. Stillness. Emptiness. Maybe the sun would not let its grace shine upon the Vanirs again? Would the holy sun never come back? Would the Vanirs be banished to darkness forever? Love had thought these thoughts before but they came back time and time again. The scare of a winter that lasted forever, the FIMBULWINTER and darkness forever gave her shivers all over.

The Hofgydja Brid now laid her hands on the Spring Eve's sun's waning stone to awe the stone but also to self-load with power for the sake of all the Vanir tribe. Through her and her craft the force of the last strong rays was channeled. She stood up and took the first dins of the song that since old times always followed upon a Midsummer sunset. All joined in the singing that was heard far, far away.

The stone-carvers made marks on bark and wood to better remember the holy Sun's waning. The feast had begun. Love could hear the dins of the feast from far away.

They drank large quantities of ale. The eighty-one Twains withdrew to the woods. Love and O'Rian sipped the ale gently. It was good not to drink too much or the teeming would be too crazy. Just a little was best. The green ground gave beautiful and alluring feelings, thought Love. She felt as if Goddess Njård's, Nerthus, Anu's lewd, the power of growth, would never end. O'Rian talked about Anu, the mother-goddess. The goddess of fruitfulness. They walked hand in hand up onto a hill.

From the hill they could vaguely see the Shrine of Dowth. O'Rian told Love much more about the Shrine at Knowth. O'Rian told that one shrine's ingong was headed towards the Midwinter solstice whilst other ingongs in Knowth have the time was headed towards the Spring and Fall Eves, like Abu

Simbel in Egypt. The Knowth kerbstones have been carved with many signs marking the reckoning of the moon.

O'Rian asked Love how long the Rosers would stay. Love answered that they would take part in the Spring Eve feast and then go to Stonehenge and Woodhenge and then stay at Knowth for the Fall Eve and then to Newgrange at Yuletide. O'Rian sighed and said he envied of her long trip. He was not likely to ever come out on such a long fare. There were too many skilled Gydjas and Gothis who had a higher rank and would go instead. Love soothed him and said it would be okay.

"You are always welcome to come with us. We will show you everything," said Love and Karla with one reethe.

"I'd love to," said O'Rian.

Love and O'Rian strolled through the lush green woods and then sat down at one of O'Rian's most liked trees, an oak, dair. They hugged, watching the Sun all the time. They did not want to miss the dawn. The night stars were not awake now. Heavy clouds hindered them but they seemed to be lightening up.

The Moon still gave enough light to light up their path and give them good guidance about the time. When they came back to the Weoh of Knowth they saw that other twains, who had also warmed up in the lush woods, came strolling to take their places in the Settra-houses around the Knowth-Weoh. The light became brighter and now it would not be long before the sun's rays shone into Newgrange's holy Weoh. The settra-girls had a huge amount of work to do. They were to paint both the bride and groom in the finest colours that each tribe could make. They would also smear the bride and groom with the Holy oil and ensure that all Gydy-tokens sat on the right place.

Many folk crowded into the small Settra-houses. Love was surprised that the Settra-houses were so small. Much smaller than those at the causeway Rösa ring in Roden, which measured 20 by 12 feet. Karla undressed Love quickly, smeared her with good-smelling oil and then for the fullway walk dressed her in her best kirtle, a beautiful rope skirt, a bronze neck-ring, Love's Vigydja armrings, a topped bronze buckle with mazes, wild boar tusks that Karla fastened in the rope skirt. Karla gave Ull's ring to O'Rian and tied then the Goddess Fulla's golden hairband around Love's blonde hair.

Karla righted the topped bronze buckle. The Settra-girls rushed to and fro and quarreled about oils and colors. Then Karla undressed O'Rian and smeared him with oil. His body carvings, three Newgrange spirals on each shoulder and nine four-sides on his chest, shone in the light from the fire. She fastened her Fullway walk cloth around his waist with a knot that could easily be opened. She gave him the Holy measures, an ell and a quarter pole. She painted the wedding twain on his forehead and on his thigh with smoked red ochre so they were dark red. Love nodded allowingly. They hurried because dawn was coming closer. Almost all the twains had taken their seats in front of the holy Stones around the Shrine at Knowth. Even Visten and his Vigydja, Branwed from Dowth, had come into place, as had also Sirpa and Tarja. The Hofgothi Daragh stood ready at the stone beside Love. The Settra-girls crouched behind the twains. They should be ready in case anything went wrong. There was always a Völse that did not want to rise. Now the Hofgydja was carried on the stretcher or fore-bed towards the Knowth shrine. Eight men bore the broad stretcher along the northern Fullway walk, where many kinsmen were lined up. Love could not get an overview of how many people were here to awe Imbolg. Love knew from before that many Spring Eve awers would leave due to much ale drinking but no one did so this time. This gathering would gather many. There had never been any doubt. Love held tightly

to O'Rian's hand. She felt high-strung and horny. She had butterflies in her stomach. O'Rian said he felt the same way.

Now the Vanirs' first Hofgydja was borne up the northern Fullway walk to the waiting Hofgothi Daragh. In front of the stretcher walked four bronze-lur blowers,

Nineteen bone-flute blowers, twenty-one drummers and first of all two men each carrying a hollow round stock in bands around their necks. Beside went or rather danced, friked, a man with lace bands around his knees and ankles. He drummed the beat with two large drumsticks on the hollow stock. A wonderful sound. The Vanir kinsmen sat on their knees along the Fullway walk and patted the same beat as the dancing drummer, who in turn got help from the twenty-one drummers who walked further back in the tow. After the bearers, ninety-nine singers walked in foot-wide greyish white robes, singing the Teeming song. The choir grew stronger the closer they came the holy Knowth Weoh. Love felt hugstrong feelings welling up inside her. She squeezed O'Rian's hand even harder and looked briefly at Karla, who winked in answer.

"Look at all the 81 Twains! They look so happy and horny. This is a good sign," said Love to O'Rian.

"They look good, they're all so handsome. Who will give birth to the sun-child at Yuletide?" asked O'Rian.

"Let us guess," O'Rian looked at Love and gazed over the 81 twains that stood and held hands ready to teem.

"Oh that's hard, perhaps the Twain over there by the ninth Kerbstone. Nine gives luck, or eight if you reckon the first one twice," said Love. "81 is 9 times 9 and the 19 year cycle is a holy tool. If you count one as the first it will be 18 years and 4.5 times 18 makes 81. The stars tell us everything," she said and gazed into the eyes of O'Rian, who kissed her and said,

"You mean the blond girl with the long hair and the Fulla-snood and the tall man with the strong thighs and the curly red hair? "

"Yes. He has nice feet. I love his thighs, he can run many miles," said Love.

"Oh that Twain, they are really good-looking and sexy. They come from known kins and have helped us many times with the moulding of bronze," said O'Rian.

"I mun how the girl-friends of the blond girl with the Fulla-snood, Mildgyth, hindered all the other men from reaching the middle of the maze where Mildgyth was waiting for her lover Aedan to come and lift her up and bring her out of the maze to the Wigbed.

The girls poked sticks between the legs of the other boys so that they fell and only Aedan reached Mildgyth and now you see that they are a Twain, Feast-folks," said O'Rian to Love.

"Oh, so much love. I want to cuddle," said Love and looked deep into O'Rian's eyes.

The dancing drummer looked alternately at dawn and at the shrine to measure time. When he saw that the tow was going too slowly he eked the beat and drummed faster. The Fullway walk eked the speed and they came closer. Arriving at the shrine the dancing drummers suddenly stopped beating the drum. Stillness. Sudden stillness. It was time to Teem!

The Hofgydja Brid, smeared and adorned with all the wealthy things the Vanir tribes could bring, was now on the holy forebed. She shone with gold and bronze. Love thought she might be carrying nearly



one six stones in weight. In her hair the Settra-girls had put the finest feathers the woods could give. The bridal settra-oil flashed her body carvings.

The Hofgydja stretched out both arms and then lowered them very slowly, matched only by nine bone-flutes that sounded like the swallows' swirl. Karla pulled the knot linked to O'Rian's Fullway walk cloth and it fell off. She did the same with Love's Fullway walk cloth. Love and O'Rian were naked. The other Settra-girls did the same. The Settra-girl of the Hofgothi Daragh had not pegged his Fullway walk cloth as she should have done and it got stuck. Karla cut the string with a flint knife. The Settra-girls of the 81 twains took the men by their hands and lay them on the ground, and then put them all down. The Hofgydja Brid stopped lowering her arms until she saw that all was ready. Karla lay O'Rian down gently so that his feet touched the Holy Stone. Love saw how all the other 81 Settra-girls did the same as did the Settra-girl Maeve that helped the Twain with the Fulla snood and the guy with nice sexy feet. Love saw and shivered. Even the Hofgothi Daragh now lay on his back with his legs outstretched towards the holy Stone.

The settra-girl of the Hofgothi sat down on her haunches beside the Hofgothi, rubbed his chest that repeated over and over:

"Eke you Völse and taken forward, Eke you Völse and taken forward."

"Eke you Völse and taken forward, Eke you Völse and taken forward," sang all the Settra-girls and gently took the Völse each men. Karla saw that O'Rian was not ready. She took out the oil and began to smear him. She grabbed O'Rian's Völse and began to knead. When the Völse stood steady Karla also began to hum: "Eke you Völse and taken forward, eke you Völse and taken forward."

The Hofgydja lowered her arms fully. She gave the sign that all was clear. She nodded and the bearers lowered the stretcher. She got off the stretcher and went straight to the lying Hofgoden Daragh. She turned and waited for the first rays of the sun to shine on the middle of the holy Stone. She waited the sunbeam to caress the holy Spring Eve kerbstone. She beckoned to all the Gydjas to stand in the same way, that is, straight across the landscape. She stretched out her arms and began to sit down slowly. Slowly, very slowly, she sat over Hofgothi Daragh, whose Völse stood hard.

All other chosen Gydjas and learlings did the same. All the women of the 81 twains lowered themselves over their men. The Settra-girls righted the Völse. Love sank slowly down over O'Rian. Karla helped to get the Völse in the right place. Love felt how the Völse fucked her Mornir.

The Hofgydja Brid reached up and shaped her hands into a triangle. She looked toward the sun. She judged the time. The Teeming must be done just when the Sun God Ull's, Bel's first rays hit the holy Stone.

The Hofgydjan Brid sat astride the Hofgothi Daragh and began to move faster and faster. She threw her hands up and all the players with all the manifold of gadgets began playing. The choir of Settra-girls began singing. The bronze-lurs began brawling. The drums began to drum. The dancing drummer eked the beat, faster and faster. All the Gydjas and the learlings had now raised their hands over their heads and shaped them into triangles.

The Hofgydja Brid's eyes met the eyes of the dancing drummers. She looked at the sun and the Hofgothi, nodded to the dancing drummer to eke the beat even more. She looked again at the ever growing dawn. Love looked at O'Rian. He did not seem to be able to hold on much longer. Love skipped a couple of beats so O'Rian would not teem her too early, not before the sun rays reached the holy Stone, or the whole harvest could go wrong. Maybe for many years.

O'Rian sweated and squirmed. Karla put a blindfold over his eyes so that he could come back to earth more easily.

The Hofgydja saw the sun, got the nod from the aldermen starwatchers and watched all the landmarks in the landscape. When all rays of the sun shone in the right places, she nodded three times to the dancing drummer who could barely dance any faster. He beat his drumsticks as hard and as quickly as he could. Brid also nodded to the stone carvers, who began to mark the stone with roundels, notches, and marks to mun this time, this teeming of the sun and the earth.

Love saw that now it was not only the eighty one twains, the Hofgydjas were also taking part in the teeming. Now everybody was making love. All Imbolg kinsmen and kinswomen made love. Now there was a big feast. To have a child who was the child of the sun meant happiness for all time and most likely a Gydyda allowance. A child of the Sun who could become the leader of all the tribes.

When the Sun God Ull's or Bel's first rays broke over the land line and drilled through the large wooden holes to shine on the middle of the triangle, the Hofgydja Brid put her left hand on the roundel at the holy stone and the Hofgothi Daragh spurted his seed into her womb. Love could see the 81 Twains teem at the same time. The Settra-girls had done an awesome job.

The Vigydya Aveta took Love and O'Rian by the hand and led them into the darkness of the Mornir of Knowth, passing the twains who teemed outside. Love and O'Rian felt like they were the sunbeams of Ull or Bel and they were now bringing the seed of Tir na nog into the Mornir of Knowth, the tunnel into Njård or Anu. Love and O'Rian smiled at each other. Love shrugged with happiness. Life could not be better. She felt her own Mornir getting wet. There was so much sex in the air. They bowed and Love saw another tunnel leading to the right. Aveta led them quickly through the gang to the cross-shaped hollow inside of Knowth. It was dark. Pitch dark. Love had to feel the way with her hands. Aveta led them to a wigbed with a girl on top.

Inside in the holy Weoh of Knowth sat the girl chosen to become a gydyda on a round stone wigbed. The girl was inside in the gang, the tunnel of the Mornir of Knowth.

The beam of light reached all the way along the Fullway walk, the holy stone that is the Wigbed that lay to the right of Love. Around the stone was nine yellow-clad Vigydjas with yellow-white scarves. Now Love saw who was on the stone Wigbed. It was Summerset. Her friend Summerset would bring forth the Tir na nog, the sun's children. Love was just dazed.

Summerset sat naked on the Wigbed with her legs drawn up. She leaned on her hands and held her head back so that her hair fell freely.

The tips of her long, reddish-brown hair touched her shoulders gently. Love saw Summerset's beautiful feet and hands. Love thought she had never seen more beautiful Vigydja-limbs. It seemed clear that these handsome hands and feet would have the power to allure the sun. Above Summerset was a horse-dick, Völse, stuffed with linen and onions to make it stand. The Sun God Ulls, Bel's holy sunbeams fell on her maw and the Vigydjas sang a song about the Teeming, how Njård or Anu and Ull or Bel love each other and how sweet life is. The song bounced around in the sky and seemed to be everywhere. Love found the song came from all directions. Summerset's Settra-girl Maeve took hold of the Völse and brought it into Summerset's Mornir. The Settra-girl had smeared the Völse with oil so it would slip inside in spite of its size. Love saw how Summerset's mouth and lips jigged when the Völse came into her Mornir. The Vigydjas kept on singing their song about the holy teeming and when the Völse was in place, they sang:

“Let Mornir get this hap of luck!

Let Mornir get this hap of luck!

-Let Mornir get this hap of luck!

Let Njård get the Sun-seed of Ull! Let Anu get the Sun-seed of Bel !

Let Njård get the Sun-seed of Ull! Let Anu get the Sunseed of Bel !

Let Njård get the Sun-seed of Ull! Let Anu get the Sun-seed of Bel!”

Love saw how the Sun God Ull’s or Bel’s rays mad a nine-inch wide strip on Summerset’s teemed maw. Ulls or Bel’s light band of Sun-seed swung slowly over the Wigbed.

The Vigydja Aveta came and stood in front of Summerset. The Vigydja slowly brought the Holy bronze axe to touch Summerset's teemed maw and it shone with Ull’s Sun-seed.

Quickly, Aveta swapped the huge Völse to a stone Mornir and a stone Völse very alike the gifts that Karla hade given. Love saw their gifts on the Wigbed between the legs of Summerset. Swiftly Aveta poured the blend of man seed, woman sap and barley from the stone Mornir into the crack of the stone Völse and the holy blend ran in. Aveta opened the Mornir of Summerset who lifted her hips and slowly Aveta put the stone Völse inside. In the waning light Love saw the blend flow into Summerset. Summerset smiled and Aveta smeared her Mornir with the rest of the blend.

“High- awed Vigydja Summerset. You bear the sun child in your womb, you will bring forth the Tir na nog. You will lead the Teemed bride on the fields during spring after the Sun-child , the offspring, is born at Yuletide at Midwinter Solstice, at Samhan. Vigydja Summerset, you are a token for all teemed women. You are a sign of the offspring that will come at Midwinter solstice when all the stars will be in place,” said the Vigydyda Aveta and went out to the sun through the tunnel to join the Hofgydya Brid and the 81 twains waiting outside.

“All you 81 Twains you are now signs of the holy offspring. The hope of Tir na nog. One of you will be chosen by the goddesses to give birth at the Midwinter Solstice,” said Hofgydjia Brid and looked down at Daragh. He got the nod from the Aldermen, the starwatchers and with a loud reethe Brid said that the rays of Ull or Bel met the womb of the earth-goddess Njård or Anu. The Hofgydjia Brid had done it. Everything had been done at the right time in the right place. The Teeming had been fulfilled. Now there was no longer any doubt. Next year should be a very fruitful year. Yields would be greater than ever. Hoarse, wild, lewd, proud and happy screams, cheers and awes rained down over the Hofgydjia.

She smiled and spread her fingers up towards the sky.

She stood up and the seed dripped from her womb. The Settra-girl gathered the seed with her hands and her mouth both from the Hofgydjia and Hofgothi and smeared the roundels, the small round ground cupmarks in the stallar Wigbed. The Settra-girl also blended some of the seed together with the chosen barley.

All the other settra-girls came with the blend of seed and sap from the 81 Twains and gave to the Hofgothi and the Hofgydjia’s Settra-girl Maeve. Karla squeezed the Völse of O’Rian and with the same clay vessel she gathered the squirt and sap from Love and gave it to the Hof-Settra-girl Maeve. The

Hof-Settra-girl put this blend into her sheath with the whisk. She stirred. She did not shake but she stirred.

The best barley seeds from the best-ever harvest and the sap, squirt and man-seed she stirred in the sheath with the broom whisk. Karla licked her fingers. Karla loved the taste of sweet woman sap, barley and warm man-seed. The best a woman can get, she thought.

“There is a lot of seed and squirt this year. A good sign. Good harvest. There will be many children at Yuletide, at Samhain,” said O’Rian and smiled at Love.

“Yes, it sure will,” said Karla and licked her fingers again, shivering with happiness at the thought of the holy blend. She smeared her Mornir with the blend that was left between her fingers.

The red-ochre horse with the wagon that pulled the holy solar disc, now with the yellow gold gleaming side, neighed and began his laps around the Fullway walk place. The yellow Brising-disc, that disc that sparkled in the sun's rays, shone and shone over the feasting and teeming kins. Everything was done in time.

Karla had taken off O’Rian’s blindfold and he looked at Love’s handsome body. Love bent down and kissed him and eked the beat again. O’Rian winced and Love felt the Völse twitching and Love loved the feeling of having the seed spread in her body.

Love looked a little farther. It seemed to have gone well for Visten and the Vigydja from Knowth too. Many of the Twains had lay down over each other to rest. Far away from the other love-makers she heard Maren and Ingolf cry with happiness. The sun-wagon waddled slowly towards the Spring Eve stone. Its many rounds circles gave a feeling of foreverness, thought Love. This she would mun forever. This while seemed to linger forever. Time seemed to stand still.

She was ripped from her half-stupor by the dancing drummer who again, after getting a sign from the Hofgydja, struck the drum and went sun-wise along Knowth’s shrine. Some of the men took their women by the ankles and spun them around and around to give further boost to the holy seed. The women screamed with a mixture of fright and delight. It was a must that the man was not drunk enough to lose his grip because then the woman might hit the stone of the Shrine and although it was a Holy Stone, it was hard.

The drummers stopped. The Hofgydja Brid gave a sign to begin the Fuccan–bylaw.

“Look over there,” said O’Rian. “

The Hof-Settra-girl Maeve is giving the sheath to the man with the awesome thighs,” said Love.

“The Hof-Settra-girl will bind the sheath with the holy blend to Aedan’s hip,” said O’Rian.

The man with the nice feet and the strong thighs stood ready to plough, to fuccan a Goth-acre. He had an awesome horse that was smeared with red ochre and adorned with flowers to pull the ard. The holy wooden ard.

Love brooded when she saw the ard and the strong horse. That ard will take away the megi from the hacking axe, she mumbled to herself. She ended her wondering when all the kinsmen and kinswomen screamed and cheered.

“The sun is warm and therefore the earth, the mother-goddess Nerthus, Njård, Anu is ready to take the seed of the sun-god Ull,” said the Hofgydja Brid and nodded to the Hof-Settra-girl Maeve, who held

the holy horse with ard. The Holy plougher Aedan, the man with the nice feet with the sheath and the holy whisk was nearly ready. Nearly ready to plough the 220 yards long or 242 Orkney yards long Gydja-acre. His Völse was not standing. He had to plough and spread the seed along the 220 yards long furrow. All the kinsmen and Kinswomen had gathered around the holy field of Njård, Anu to watch the holy plowing, the Fuccan. They screamed high and together:

“Fuccan, Fuccan, Fuccan, Focail, Focail, Focail”, loud and clear.

This meant it was time to spread the seed along the furrow, into the mother goddess Nerthus or Anu. The man with the nice feet, strong thighs and red hair was shaking with all the stormy screams.

While the Hof-Settra-girl Maeve checked the broom whisk and the sheath, Karla sneaked in and smoothed Aedan’s Völse to make it hard. He smiled with his whole ansyn.

“Fuccan, fuccan, fuccan, fuccan,fuccan,fuccan, focail, focail, focail,” brawled the Kins. Some even screamed “cogida” or “foder” so as to mun some older words.

With a smack from the Hofgydja, who looked at the early sun, the holy horse began to pull the ard and plough the acre and the plougher Aedan spread the gathered seed on the furrows with the whisk. He dipped the small broom in his sheath with his right hand and with a handsome twist he spread the seed over the furrows.

“FUCCAN, FUCCAN, FOCAIL, FUCCAN, FUCCAN, FUCCAN, FOCAIL, FUCCAN, FUCCAN!” shouted the crowd.

The red ochre horse pulled the ard and the furrows opened up like the Mornir of the women in heat, thought Love and kissed O’Rian on the neck.

The Hof-Settra-girl Maeve followed the plougher Aedan and she and Karla sucked his Völse to make it shine and glisten and stay hard during the holy ploughing of Njård or Anu, the field. The fuccan, the Focail!

The plougher was a token for the sun-god and the earth was the earth-goddess Njård. He spread the gathered seed blended with the best barley and the magic herbs on the holy furrows of the Gydja-acre. Love saw the blend land on the furrows and melt in. Oh, holy God it made her horny. Love felt her Mornir becoming wet again. The horse pulled the 220 yards and the Kinswomen and Kinsmen hurrayed with happiness.

The plougher Aedan had made it, he had spread the holy blend with a hard-on. Karla and the Hof-Settra-girl Maeve nodded to each other and kissed as a sign of good work together.

“Good girl, well done. You’re so good Karla!” Love, Ingolf and Maren told Karla when she came back.

“Thanks, you are so awesome all of you, and both the plougher Aedan and the Hof-Settra-girl Maeve were so tasty,” said Karla and smiled.

The Hofgydja Brid and the Hofgothi Daragh lifted their hands and shouted:

“THE FUCCAN FEAST MAY BEGIN !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

The dance, the frik, carried on. The drums drummed. All joined in the singing and teeming.

The Fuccan-feast grew. Love thought the feast would never end. The Rosers, O'Rian, Elspeth, Tarja and Sirpa danced until they were deathly tired. Karla, the Hof-Settra-girl Maeve and Rodulf made love all seven. All women squirted into the mouth of Rodulf and then they all swapped the squirt back and forth until Karla and Maeve swallowed it all. Visten and his Vigydja seemed to be able to dance and teem forever. When the holy sun was high in the morning sky, they just lay in the grass and enjoyed the food and drink and the good weather. Love whispered in the ear of O'Rian that he had to show her all the Knowth secrets. He said as a whisper that he would like to do so and that the Rosers were welcome to stay with them until it was July. Love said on the Rosers' behalf that the Rosers would gladly help with the harvest, the equipment, the mushrooms, the berry picking. O'Rian took the time to also invite Tarja and Sirpa, who said yes.

Next ...

## Chapter 17 - LOVE VISITS STONEHENGE AND WOODHENGE

Love looked at Knowth one last time before she stepped aboard Noatun. Knowth, the Weoh of Love, knowledge, happiness and fullness. She liked Knowth a lot. Knowth was so alive, so full of life. The womb of times to come. She had been glad every inch of time she had been here. She had learnt a lot. Maren, Karla and the others were already gathered in Noatun and had brought all the goods with them that they would need for the trip to Stonehenge and Woodhenge. Love munned that there was a small woodhenge just outside Knowth where she had waited for a while according to the Knowth bylaw. She brooded if the big Woodhenge near Stonehenge would be built the same and have the same measurements. She bowed to the land and climbed aboard the ship. Karla went up in the stem and bared herbreasts as a sign of thankfulness as Love had sat down on the thwart. Noatun sailed out and headed over the sea towards Stonehenge and the Isle of Wight.

Roar pointed out the Milford quarry when they sailed along the coast. "There you have the quarry that gave the holy stones to Stonehenge," he said to Love, who brooded in her own thoughts.

"Yes, magic, a lot of megi," she answered

"The heavy, holy stones were shipped to the river Avon from two sides. We will go by the lower side because I know that route but not the other one."

Noatun got good wind and Love fell asleep. Ingolf, Karla and Visten also slept. Roar held the steering-oar steady. He loved these whiles, meek but steady wind in the right headway. That was a good token. The Sun and the Earth liked them.

The days and the nights passed. At dawn, Rodulf cried out that they could see the Allowed island, the Isle of Wight, far away. They turned off at the Selsey half-island and entered the strait between the mainland and the Allowed island. Rodulf told them about the village Ryde, which was home to a large Rod that could also be seen from the sea. They carried on through the strait and passed the village Cowes on the harbour side, whilst beholding Need Oar on the other. They rowed slowly up towards Yarmouth and came back out to sea at Milford on Sea.

Another half lap of the sun later they found the River Avon and started rowing up the river. The river was wide and the stream was not so strong at first so it was easy to row. Their first stop was Ringwood, a small but worthy place of worship with a large ring of Rods.

The Rods were not as handsome, as Roar put it, as those they would come to see at Woodhenge. Eighty-nine in number, they were in an outer and an inner ring. Nobody was worshipping when the Rosers rowed close to the shore. They did not go ashore but rowed by with awe and Karla bared her beasts.

Love became fond of the landscape. The setting was talking to her. She felt at once as if she was linked to the land around her. She sat down in the bow, bared her breasts, dropped her arms, closed her eyes and let her Vi-gydja megi spread over the surroundings, getting answers straight away from the little people and goblins that lived in the underworld, who told them that the Rosers were welcome. Love had such a strong feeling of wholeness and togetherness that she thought she was about to be lifted from the ship Noatun by the strong megi around her.

They moored Noatun at Klearbury ring and rested. They had fared far and felt tiredness in both their arms and legs. They slept in the boat. Love stayed up that night to see if the stars would bring any signs about their fare. Late at night, in the dawn of the day, just as the starlight was slowly fading, the Large Bear star twinkled to her, which gave her hope and trust that they were doing everything right.

The next day they fared up the river Avon. They rowed past Ogbury and Woodford, coming to Amesbury a little later. There they moored Noatun and the friendly villagers greeted the Rosers and showed them the way to Stonehenge. The Rosers easily found the way to the holy place Stonehenge, the place that showed the time. The road had been trotted on for many hundreds of years when the boulders and equipment were dragged from the river to the holy Vi-place. The Rosers neared Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain, two miles from Amesbury. Love pranked with happiness to see the stones that might be the most renowned Stallar of them all. But Stonehenge did not give the great feeling she had wished for. It was drowned in the rolling Wiltshire surroundings. Only when Love and the Rosers came very close to Stonhenge could she behold and understand its wealth.

They came closer and did not see that an old woman was standing right next to them. "Welcome, the Rosers, you shall be. You come late. To be late is not good. It may lead to unreadiness and that we don't want," said the old woman sternly and urgently. She carried on without waiting for an answer. "Who is Love, the allowed Vigydja of the Rosers tribe?"

"I," replied Love and took some steps forward.

"Good, then you are to come with me. We'll go to Woodhenge. The Twain Hofgydja of the Anglers is waiting. The others shall stay here. The settra-girl shall come with Love and me," said the old woman harshly. Karla nodded. She understood. She, the settra-girl, had the task of bringing the holy gifts and ensuring that they were in good shape. The gifts in turn led to many rights and duties and were proof of the long friendship between the two tribes and also of who had the right to trade and how this trade would run. The gifts were a settlement regarding friendship and trade.

"But please," said Ingolf, "before we head off we want to know more about this holy building." The old woman stroked her white-grey hair backwards. Her hair had been put up in a woollen hairnet. She was of average height and was dressed in a light blue ankle-length kirtle with magic signs along the wrist and bottom. She squinted up at the sun and made a quick breakdown how much time they had.

"In very short terms. This Stallar shows the time. No other Stallar is wiser than Stonehenge. This Stallar shows the sunrise and sunset at the Midwinter solstice, the sunrise and sunset at the Midsummer solstice, the northernmost and southernmost moon rises and much much more. You must be outside the ditch all the time otherwise you will touch megi you do not have the right to awaken," replied the woman and turned to Love and Karla. "Ready? Good, then we can go."

The old woman did not seem so old any longer and with a good spring in her step she trotted towards Woodhenge. Love and Karla followed in her tracks. Love was enthralled with the allured meeting. She, Love, would meet the Twain Hofgydja of the Angles.

Love looked admiringly at the winsome building of Stonehenge. What a place of worship, Stonehenge could really be called a true "Vi" or "We", she thought.

Love let her eyes wander over the fine-edged stones. The middle part was of Sars-Stones, thirty in number, topped with roof-stones. In a ring inside the thirty Sars- stones was a ring with sixty blue stones and behind them five twains of Sars-Stones that formed a horseshoe opening out into a holy causeway. Love's thoughts wandered to the nineteen-year renewal when the Midsummer solstice or the



Midwinter solstice comes at the full moon. In the middle of the horseshoe was, of course, the Stallar-stone.

Love's mind was filled with pride and happiness. To behold the Stallar stone of Stonehenge! Her mother, Leufsta, the Hof-gydja had been here and worshipped along with the Stonehenge bylaws and feasts and could tell many long stories about everything she had seen. Love sank for a while in her mother's stories and became quite thrilled.

Love's eyes fixed on the huge Meatan-stone that looked like a heel. She reckoned it was at least thirty feet high, but that she could be mistaken. The Meatan-stone stood in the middle of the holy causeway, something she was not used to, about one hundred feet from its beginning.

They went to the east side of the holy causeway. The old woman said sourly: "No one may enter the holy causeway when it is not a holy time. Understood?" She turned around and stared Love and Karla straight in the eyes. Love felt that the old woman did not like younger women and nodded in agreement. She assumed it was not a good thing to get herself into quarrels with this stern woman. Love smiled at Karla, who smiled back.

The old woman, who had not yet said her name, squinted at the sun and eked her speed. Love and Karla had a hard time keeping up with her quick step.

They neared the end of the thousand ells long holy causeway, which stretched in a north-easterly headway.

Love looked around to the left and saw the walls, parallel walls about three thousand two hundred yards long, lying north of Stonehenge. Love thought for a while to ask the older woman about the walls' meaning but she changed her mind at the last moment. Love assumed that the walls showed an event in the sky, whose munin the Gydjas had deemed to keep forever. Her mother probably knew what the walls meant.

They went straight from the holy causeway and saw the walls become bigger and bigger. On the right they saw a number barrows rise. Love could even glimpse the large mounds in front of the left part of the walls. Now she could not help but ask the older woman the meaning of the barrows.

The older woman looked touchily at Love as she carried on strutting forwards at a brisk speed. "These barrows are awed to good and known families who have given birth to knowledgeable, witty and cunning Gydyas and Gothis. We are short of time and have to hurry," she said, then turned around and returned her gaze to the Durrington Walls that appeared far away. Sometimes it was hard for Love and Karla to see the Durrington Walls due the hidden woods but every now and then when they came up onto a hill or came to an open field where they could behold the mighty walls. Love saw that the woods had almost been cleared away.

She missed the land of the Rosers; she loved the lovely bright woods with halls of oaks and beeches, winds and birches. Love saw that many trees had given way to clearing and had given timber to the Longhouses, outbuildings and Vi-houses.

Love wondered aloud about the Durrington Walls and to her surprise got an answer from the touchy woman. She told Love that it had taken two hundred men and fifty women five to eight years to dig the Durrington Walls. The trench was dug to a depth of twenty feet and the embankment had been one hundred feet wide with its top over forty-four feet tall. Of the Durrington Walls' two openings, one was towards the River Avon and thus in a south-easterly headway and the other lay in a northwesterly

headway. Inside were two dykes, which formed a northern and a southern moon-shaped ring. Between the outermost ramparts measured at a length of one thousand five hundred feet she continued to say that within the two dykes were a large round building used for big Feasts, and akin to Stonehenge. The wooden rod building was open to the sky in the middle part. Right in the middle of the wooden building in the Durrington Walls were overwhelming oak-poles with carved signs. Love measured the width of the oak-poles: just a bit over three feet.

Love brooded over whether she had heard of such large oaks before but she could not remember. They carried on walking in a north-easterly headway towards the Durrington Walls and Woodhenge. The old woman kept on telling. She seemed to have calmed down when she caught sight of the Durrington Walls and the Woodhenge, an akin building.

“There is ease in the holy “Vi”, therefore you shall not enter into the Durrington Walls but you will be greeted in the Woodhenge by our second in rank, the Twain Hofgydja Loweswater.”

From far away Love could see that many people were dwelling. They darted here and there for various chores and seemed very busy. Everyone seemed to know where they were going and what they should do. As the Rosers came closer Love saw a manifold of workshops and small huts not far from Woodhenge, which seemed small against the overwhelming Durrington Walls. Love saw the men carrying many bronze things, cloths, holy signs, food, herbs, ale, many sizes of bread and in many bowls. The people went this way and that.

Without asking Love, the older woman said that sun was already low and would soon wane tonight and the evening bylaws would soon begin with awe that only the Durrington Walls could show. With that in mind today was a normal day but nevertheless the night’s bylaws were fulfilled in awe of the goddess Njård. Love rejoiced in all the things that were fulfilled to the goddess Njård’s glory and awe. She had heard about the awe from her mother, Hofgydja Leufsta, but she had not seen that there would be such awesome finery and so much kindness.

“They call me Binkerdink,” said the older woman unexpectedly. She carried on without waiting for an answer. “Let’s go around Woodhenge and where you stay until you get the sign to meet the Hofgydja Loweswater.

Now Love beheld Woodhenge. Two hundred and seventy feet at its full height. The straw roof’s bow pointed upwards to the sky. Love saw that it was like a hole in the middle of the building. The courtyard was open so that the sun would be able to reach in. Building a Vi-house where the sun god Ull’s rays could not reach in was out of the question. The twenty-one feet high oak-poles kept the thatched roof in place. The walls between the posts were made of dried mud and straw.

Love reckoned to one hundred and four poles before they had come to Woodhenge’s opening towards the northeast. She saw that there must be at least the same number of poles crafting the inner wall and from what Love could see it had been built in the same way. Around Woodhenge ran a ditch, like a moat. The earth had been heaped up on the edge and formed a wall.

When they came to the opening three women, Urd, Skuld and Verdandi, sat in the opening. The three women wove a long weave. They nodded to Love and Karla they had guardedly greeted Binkerdink. Binkerdink entered between the banks of piled soil which made the ingong to Woodhenge. The three weavers nodded to Love and Karla to sit. They sat cross-legged and watched as weavers weaved.

“My name is Love and I am of Rosers kin and Karla is my Settra,” said Love gently to break the silence.

“We know,” said one of the weavers. “We are named Urd, Skuld and Verdandi. We are weaving the web of life. The world wide web of life.”

Love was speechless. Karla looked at her, horrified. “Has something happened?” asked Karla blithely.

Love rushed to shake her head and stared at the three weavers. Sure they sat there and wove. Was it perhaps just by chance that they had at the same names as the Norns, those who could tell the time to come? And if so, what did they do here? Love asked herself.

The woman who had spoken smiled and nodded her head. Then she went on weaving quietly as if nothing had happened. It was not long before Binkerdink came back and beckoned to Love and Karla to follow her. Love and Karla stood up, then to her horror Love saw that the Norns were gone. She winced.

“Karla, did you see when the weavers disappeared?” asked Love, surprised.

“I must have drowsed,” said Karla and followed Binkerdink into Woodhenge. Love tried carefully to find where weavers had been sitting but no sign of activity could be found. She shook her head and blinked. Had she drowsed too? she wondered.

Love stood still for a while and then shook her head doubtfully. Then she made haste to follow Karla and Binkerdink. Love saw that the strong floor of chalk still had the tracks from all the feet that have passed in and out of Woodhenge. Binkerdink said to them to be quiet and full of awe. Apart from the first path,, the outside of which was also the outside of Woodhenge, Love reckoned two paths leading around Woodhenge. The oval hole in the middle gave the right amount of light to enlighten all three aisles. Love stroked her hand along the carved pillars. Each bar had signs, rounds, magic casts, rods, Suns, Moons and much more. The poles had been painted first with red ochre and then with dried yellow resin color.

Love found Woodhenge to be beaming with brightness and she would try to get the Rosers to build something like it. Here in the New World everything was so much bigger and higher. She recognized everything of course but the buildings, the Vi-houses, the Rods, everything was bigger, longer, wider. Maybe not better but in any case larger, thought Love as they walked through the aisles until they reached a high seat where the Hofgydja Loweswater was awaiting her guests.

Love could not quite make out the ansyns of the Hofgydjas as the light was only dim. Love beheld mats made of the finest cloth laid in front of the high seat and the Hofgydja asked them to sit down.

When Love's eyes became used to the dim light she saw that there were two other people in the room. Two men sat behind her on two mats, busy with some kind of carving. Love also saw that there were two large stone coffins on either side of the seat.

Around the high seat, which reached the Hofgydja's shoulders, hung dried flowers that shone magnificently with all their former glory. On the walls hung bronze axes, gold brass, bronze howl and reindeer antlers.

On the oak high seats were whirling rounds and magic tokens. Two whirls, both sunwise, ended the back of the high seat. Around and above the stone coffins stood two clay jugs from which Love smelled mint and mistletoe. Love saw first of all an urn that stood in front of the Hof-gydja, between her feet. At the top were the three straight lines with tokens followed by many upright lines running straight down to the bottom of the urn. From the urn came a smell Love recognized but she could not think of what it was that smelled so strongly.

The Hofgydja, wearing a red Hofgydja dress, waved with her left hand and one of the men came up with three clay jugs and a cup. Love and Karla took the jugs willingly and the man poured out a good-smelling hot drink. The Hofgydja Loweswater waved smoothly with her right hand and Binkerdink left in a flash.

The Hofgydja Loweswater sat in the high seat. Her ansyn was lean, almost sharp. Love thought she must be at least six feet tall and aged over sixty Midsummers. Her red Hofgydja dress came down to her ankles and wrists.

The neckline cloth had been sewn with Sun Signs and many stories that spoke about how the Goddess Njård was lathered. All the signs had been sewn with a brilliant fine gold thread. A gold band held back her stark white hair. Around her waist she wore a bronze buckle that held together the rich signed belt. In the middle of the buckle a two-inch pin pointed out. Tiny, tiny engravings created rounds around the bronze trophy. Moccasins with Sun Signs and pointed rounds gave her dress a cast of wholeness.

“Your mother is the Hofgydja Leufsta,” said the Hof-gydja Loweswater with a bass voice that made Love and Karla twitch. Love had never heard a woman talk with such a low reethe. For a while, she doubted that she had heard properly. Had perhaps one of the men said the words? Love wondered in surprise. Love did not hesitate long because the Hofgydja Loweswater soon spoke again.

“Love, you have a fine and handsome name. I guess your mother told you that I come from the northern parts of land of the Anglers, where we worship Goddess Lofn, the Goddess of Love. In her awe we have named a Holy Lake Loweswater and therefore I bear this name in my role as a Hofgydja. Your mother told you and I have myself been in your land many times, so I know that you have many, almost reckonless places and Stallars bearing the name Love or Lof or Löv. Lofn is for me the Vanir Holy goddess because she carries love in her fruitful womb. She creates links between woman and man and she pours oil on the waves to lighten the yoke when the split becomes too great. Man and woman should do two things with their lives, They should feed the number and growth of our people. The man stands for number and the woman for growth. With two such different tasks it is not hard to understand why men and women quarrel. Then comes the Goddess Lofn, the Goddess of Love, to ensure that women and men can become one whole.

“How's your mother? The Hofgydjan Loweswater said suddenly and with an even deeper reethe.

“My Mother the Hofgydja Leufsta has caught lung illness and is bedridden,” said Love and thought she could understand why Hofgydjan Loweswater had such high rank among her kinsmen. When you hear her reethe you just obey, she thought and looked at Loweswater.

“That is bad news. Leufsta has always had good health and plenty of strength. How grave is it? Loweswater asked, her pointed oblong ansyn askew.

“I do not know if I will see her when I get home from this fare,” said Love sadly .

“I have the uttermost hope that she will regain her health and I want you to greet her many times from me. I'll talk to goddesses for her sake,” said Loweswater and continued without drawing breath. “You'll travel to Newgrange and take part in the Midsummer solstice and the fulwigan of the King, Guena, the Young Konan.”

“Yes,” replied Love lamely.

“Then I want you to talk to as many people as possible about the nearing danger, the Æsir raids inland. They will enter by force. They carry death on their shoulders.

“We Vanirs live as friends for life. But these men want nothing more than to make war. If we do not act now they will win and our bylaws and doings will be forgotten until the luck of the Æsir changes. Unfortunately this may take many thousands of years. Therefore, my dear Love, I want you to speak with those who have the power that we have to become more alive and resist this wave of war that will soon wash over us. I want you to talk to the Gydjas of the Irish, I want to talk to Angles and Saxon Gydjas and equally with the Gothis of the Danes, the Gydjas of the Gutars and the Gydjas of Rus. In the unlikely event that any of the Copts Gydjas will take part don’t be ashamed and talk to them too. The Copts carry great knowledge and cunningness and maybe they can help us. On the way are you going by the Orkneys and stay in Stenness, where you should also talk to the Gydjas and Gothis. Of course, in Tanum and Herrebro and of course in the land of the Rosers, spread the word.

“Dear Hofgydja Loweswater, the task rests heavily on my young shoulders. I do not know if I can shoulder such a mighty task,” said Love broodingly.

“No, I have talked to many others and I still want you. You have the knowledge and the will to deal with the issue,” said Loweswater with her thrusting low voice, and carried on, “When knowledge can be spread without hindrance, when knowledge fares at the speed of sound then our knowledge and bylaws will be sought after but as long as there are hindrances for learning then the inland war men will have power. They will use the lack of free knowledge. This day will come, you can be sure. We have lived long in peace, in frithur. We Vanirs know no borders, no duties or thugs that will take traded goods or the boar tusks we use to pay with. Knowledge flows freely between our kins and therefore we have a high level of living. Our ships sets sail wherever they want and they bring knowledge. The ships are our free tongue, our wealth. They give us the freedom to talk to anyone we want. We Vanirs have no limits. Speech flows freely with us. Freedom is our warrant of the time to come.

“Unfortunately it will not always remain so. Men of war will set limits to knowledge. Knowledge will not be allowed to float freely between different places. The free flow of knowledge will be cut off, until one day with a new ship there will be another way to get the free flow of knowledge we Vanirs have today. So may it be,” said the Hofgydjan Loweswater and smiled at Love and Karla.

Love did not know how to answer. She pondered the words that the Hofgydja had given her and saved them in her heart. She would do what she could to meet the Hofgydja’s wish but she also knew said that as she had said it would be many years before the freedom they had now became true again. She, Love, would try anyway. She would do her best for the free flow of knowledge.

The Hofgydja Loweswater turned to one of the men and let her low reethe roar around his ears. He jumped up and flung himself through a rope curtain.

He soon came back with a handsome urn, about a foot high. The urn had a lid in the shape of a woman sitting in a high seat. The back of the high seat stool handed her to slightly above the waist. On the sides of the high seat were written sun signs. The finely shaped woman wore a flat hat and a kirtle that reached to her ankles and wrists. The woman’s kirtle had signs written on it. The woman sat in thought and held her head with her hands so that her elbows were on her knees.

“This gift is a token of our long friendship. I want you to bring it to your mother, the Hofgydja Leufsta, and your uncle Hauskuld. I guess the old Hofgothi Olof has lived so many years that they’re a burden to him. He’ll be ninety years old by now,” said Loweswater.

“We will guard the gift according to the best of my knowledge and hope that the weather Goddesses will stand us by. I myself will give the gift to my mother Hofgydjan Leufsta and to greet my Uncle Hauskuld. The Hofgothi Olof will feast for his ninety-second birthday together with the feast of the

Disatingstungle in the Göje months in the middle of winter,” answered Love and looked up at Loweswater.

Loweswater again took the floor with natural awe. “This gift also brings free trade between the Rosers tribe and all from our tribe. If an Angle or Saxon trader charges duty or if someone wants to watch our land, please tell me and I'll set things right.”

Karla hurried out of his leather bag to give the finely moulded bronze axe.

Karla thought it would be nice to finally give away the heavy and cumbersome bronze axe. The handle of the axe had stuck out in her small leather bag. The edge was not really a cutting edge but rather a rounded slow end. It was a feast axe, not an axe to fell trees. There were many sun crosses hammered into the outside of the thick bronze axe: nine bowl pit stars, three trees, two time-ships that ship with bars that measured time. One ship talked about the time when Noatun left Stonehenge. Karla had made this beforehand.

To go back to the land of the Rosers, the other ship talked about the time of the Midsummer feast at Newgrange.

“Dear Hofgydja, let us give this small gift as a sign of our long friendship and so that trade and knowledge may run freely without barriers and hindrances,” said Love proudly as she handed over the thirteen pounds of heavy bronze axe, measuring two and a half feet in width. Love continued, “the Holy bronze axe shows how we the Vanirs with great effort have begun clearing land in the woods to build We, or Weoh, Harg or Harrow, Hof and other Holy Places and to build houses and farms. The Holy bronze axe is a sign of our bylaws and doings and how our lives began.”

Loweswater waved again with her hand and one of the men stepped forward and loftily received the Holy bronze axe. “We thank you for this great gift and know our duty to warrant the gift and the thoughts behind it,” answered the Hofgydjan Loweswater and carried on, “Let us together and with the brittle clay jugs in mind enjoy a skol for our long friendship. The man who had already filled the brittle clay jugs came up and gave the beakers to Love and Karla.

Loweswater lifted her clay jug to clank the jugs of Love and Karla. The clanking of the jugs made a soft muffled sound. “Skol,” said Loweswater with such feeling that the drink in the jars shook. They smiled at each other and drank. Love felt the herby drink give her a sudden heat.

“Thralling Sister Binkerdink, ensure that our friends from the land of the Rods may return to their ship to keep on their fare to Newgrange. Time is short and we with it,” said the Hofgydja and bowed slightly to Love, after which she quickly pulled back through the rope-curtain.

While Love and Karla had been in Woodhenge, Binkerdink had taken the rest of the crew and brought them to the banks of the Avon. Love's eyes had a hard time getting used to the sharp light when they came out of Woodhenge. Love squinted at the beach and could see to the bow of Noatun. Binkerdink told them to sit in her the usual touchy manner and told them that the ship was ready to leave, equipped with food and fresh water for the rest of their fare in Anglian and Saxon waters.

Love and Karla made themselves ready to say goodbye to Binkerdink but she snapped and went back into the Woodhenge. Karla whispered to Love that she thought that poor Binkerdink had not had any love in a long time. Love replied that it seemed so but that they could not do much about it and smiled at Karla. They walked quickly towards the ship and, once all were aboard, showed great interest in Love and Karla's stories.

Rodulf made sure that the ship left the beach and they continued up River Avon. The river snaked through the greenish landscape. Sometimes there were woods of oak, maple and linden, sometimes grazed fields where sheep and cows slowly tasted the lush grass. The weather had turned out at its best.

Noatun fared slowly up the river Avon. Next they would visit Avebury and Sillbury Hill and then they would go on to Avon down to the bay of Severn, or Severn-Anger as Ingolf stubbornly called it. They rowed by Netheravon and Enford. Enford was very low and shallow and was used as a place to ford the river. In a few places the Rosers had to punt their way. Now and then they saw the rafts and boats come rowing and punting with either goods or with blue stones that would be used to repair or replace those broken.

Slowly but surely they came to Upavon. There, they stopped as they had been told by Binkerdink. And sure enough, on the beach was a man who seemed to be waiting for someone. When he saw Noatun he gave a lively wave and welcomed the Rosers to Upavon.

Love could not understand how the Hofgydja Loweswater could have told Upavon of the Rosers' coming. Love's brooding was broken by the man, who was in his thirties, with one green eye and one light red, long red hair in a pigtail and a clean-shaven ansyn, who was wearing a brown suit with a rope belt. He helped to pull up Noatun on the beach to moor her.

"My name is Touch-Wood and the Hofgydja Loweswater has ordered me to take good care of you and bring you to Avebury and Sillbury Hill. Touch-wood snapped his fingers and suddenly a dwarf named Tinker came up. Tinker wore a full suit and a funny brown linen hat and brought six horses.

Tinker's height could hardly be more than three feet, pondered Love, and looked at him in wonder. Tinker saw that Love watched him. He smiled broadly and Love smiled back.

"Folks, here are the horses, take your pick. Now we're going away on a ride," cried Tinker and handed out the horses in double quick time. Ingolf, Visten, Karla, Maren and Love sat up on the horses. Roar and Rodulf and said they wanted to stay to scrape the shells from the bottom of Noatun.

When everyone was sitting up on the horses, Tinker was left without a horse. Maren asked if he would come. "Yes, I just haven't decided who will have the pleasure of sharing their horse with me. But now I know," said the dwarf with the blue-black beard and took off, turned one and a half somersaults in the air and suddenly was sitting behind Maren on her horse. He took a firm grip round her waist.

"You're the greatest, you're the best," said Tinker, smiling at everyone who laughed out loud.

They set off whilst it was still light, for Touch-wood wanted them to leave as fast as they could. They rode speedily and came that evening to Avebury. From there they could already see Sillbury Hill far away.

"An awesome sight," said Karla to Love. "How did they build such a great barrow?"

"Anything can be done. It's all about order, willpower and abundant food. If you have enough people and work long enough everything can be done. Don't you agree, Tinker?" asked Touch-wood and looked at Tinker.

"Of course," responded Tinker, "just look at me. I'm the best in the world and I love Maren but I need the help of Touch-wood.

I tell you when to put your knees on the earth, Touch wood. Then I will stand on top of you and hug Maren. Then you will also get a new name – “Touch-earth” and a spare name, namely: “Do not – touch!”

Everyone laughed and Maren laughed the most. She slowed her horse, grabbed Tinker and put him in front of her so that he had his eyes straight ahead towards the riding headway. She gave him the reins and spurred the horse so it took off. When they came in gallop she bent over him and let her long blonde hair fall down over him. Tinker waved and shouted that he could not see anything. He waved his short arms to remove the blonde curtain. More laughs from everyone.

Maren hugged Tinker and gave him a kiss. She then set her chin on top of his head. Tinker brought her hair to the side and drew it up to his rather big ears.

Suddenly it looked like Tinker had blond hair and two heads. Ingolf laughed so hard that he fell off the horse and everyone had to stop to give him time to sit up again.

Next ...



## Chapter 18 - GEIRWALD COMES TO THE LAND OF ANGLES

The Chief Walter's army neared the narrow and long bay

Angul, the bay that gave the Angles their name. The Angles, a lofty people that was made up of six strains fullwayed to the Goddess Njård or Nerthus as Romans tended to call her. The Angles had always lived alone, and was one of the main tribes among the fruitfulness folks, the Vanirs. The other one was the tribe of the Saxons. They had got their name from the word Seax, sex the word for Völse. The cock. The sex of the man. The token of fruitfulness. The Angles and the Saxons had nearly the same bylaws and doings as the Danes and the Scanders. They had almost the same goddesses.

The Angles knew the sea and made winsome ships. The Angles also loved the bylaws and doings. They could hold on for many days, weeks, yes, months with groomings, talks about how the old bylaw was best saved and muned. The Angles wanted to brew a drink of herbs. The herb-drink they drank at regular times, at feasts they drank ale.

This Geirwald did know about the Angles. Now he found himself looting and stealing goods and gold on the Angles toll. Geirwald felt scared. The Angles might fight. Perhaps they had a giant to their help that would crush the Aesirs even before the Aesirs could enter the village and loot.

Chief Walter ordered a slow scouting trip to watch what the Angles were doing right now. They neared along the bay Angul's north shore. They peered out at one of the headlands and saw the Angles were grooming to feast at the far end of the bay.

They saw a high and big Rod on the beach in the bay end. Around the Rod danced or friked a hundred people. Men and women blended, together.

Geirwald was enthralled by the view of the Angul along the way. The bay Angul was really long and narrow. He squinted and thought he could see the sea but he boggled. Maybe the Angul went in a bend, and then he could not glimpse the Baltic Sea. Chief Walter called and Geirwald had to stop thinking. Warriors with food and weapons were stored a little further inland. They carried with them only short hand weapons.

Chief Walter ordered the group to hide and watch out carefully.

They would wait until dark and then decide what to do.

The Dance, the swing, around the Rod had swapped to a ring-dance. The Angles fastened hands and danced, every man, every woman swang around the Rod while thick hollowed logs struck the basic rhythms.

Shell-flutes and whistles of straw were heard all the way to the hiding place where the Aesirs were hiding. Geirwald saw a number of yellow clad Gydjas that walked up to the little lagoon, which lay in front of the Rod and the beach.

They carried white handkerchiefs that would become lathered along the old bylaws. Men and women held the cloths high towards the sky when they neared the little blue lagoon. Eighteen men and women danced around the six Gydjas. The Gydjas stood with their ansyns towards each other so that they formed a star. The cloths were put side by side so that they touched each other. One of Gydjas raised her eyebrows and the Gydjas slowly lowered the cloths three times out into the holy water. A Vigydja

paved her way through the dancers and came to the holy puddle to with a linden twig splash a blend on the cloths.

Geirwald could not make out the color of the liquid, but found it shimmered in white. The Vigydja sprinkled thrice with a linden twig on each cloth. Everyone who stood around the Rod sang and danced with each splash .

It felt powerful when the song picked up with a flick of each splash.

The Vigydja had surely done this before, it did not seem to be hard, but Geirwald knew it was not easy to meet the right tick every time.

Then the six yellow clad Gydjas went towards land, against a Rod who had been fullwayed with a great number of holy signs carved into the trunk. The Rod had the shape of a handsome woman. Around her upper arms were there were a wreath of a golden ring on each arm wreathed thrice .The golden ring had been cast into the wooden trunk. Even around the neck had female figure made of wood one neck-ring. Her eyes glittered in the sunshine. Geirwald did not meet her eyes of fear of becoming caught by the vanir cunningness of kennings and Seid. They could crush him with their galdars. Geirwald thought the Rod with the winsome shapes was a sign of the Goddess Nerthus or Njård, as the Angles, Saxons, Danes and Suenes called her. Geirwald found the tree seemed to be alive. He came in the mood that the tree had magic powers and that any moment could begin to move its arms or turn its wooden head. Geirwald could faintly see the Goddess Njårds tokens that were the greatest of all the tokens. The Goddess Njård signed in her most fullwayed ham, as she did the lathering of herself in the holy lake. The holy lathering was always done on a Saturday, Sunnanday Eve, the day of holy lathering. Geirwald reckoned that today was Friday, the day of the Goddess Freya and the God Frey. Thus the feast would be held tomorrow, Saturday -Latherday. Geirwald told this to Chief Walter who told the army would lay low during the day and to strike at when the Angles fullwayed along the causeway in their bay Angul. The Anglian village would not be well guarded and the Aesirs could easily seize the Anglers riches.

Geirwald kept on to behold the view with great awe.

He saw how the six Gydjas went towards the Rod with white clads to dress the goddess Njård. Couple of twains went towards the Rod and wrapped garments around the tree trunk. They walked toward each other and one of the Gydjas ducked when they met. When they had wrapped up the entire garment attachment with the garment folded once. When the first twain had done the folding the next twain kept on the next round.

When all three pairs wrapped their cloths and the Goddess Njård was clad, a doing Geirwald did not understand. The Angles stood hand in hand around the Rod, without moving, they did not sing or dance, they just stood there. Quiet without someone to lead them, without anyone saying anything. Then they sat down cross-legged, still they held each other's hands.

The Angles sat in smyltness for a long time. Geirwald did not like the stillness. He was bothered. He looked at the Chief Walter who also watched the Anglian bylaws but he seemed still. Kellner laid on his back, belched, poked sometimes his toes, sometimes his teeth with the same tooth-pick. Hradbarts evil eyes sparkled with gold thirst when he gazed over the Stallar of the Angles and other holy things.

Geirwald behold that one of the long houses were on stilts,

It was higher than the others. The house was in the middle and had a length of about thirty feet and a width of ten foot. The house on the poles had a chain of silver hanging around the front ridge. Wind discs stack out about two feet and that made the silver chain stretch out and shine in the sunshine.

A large pole with carved steps, a ladder, was raised to the house on poles and a tall slender Vigydja in yellow knee-length dress, with moccasins, and the neck-ring Brisingamen, climbed up. She stood on the little outward step that looked like a little porch and stretched out her hands with splayed fingers. Geirwald saw that she was missing a little finger of the left hand, although this, she held the rank as a Vigydja. She really needed to have knowledge and was perhaps also cunning in seid, Geirwald thought while he lay on the side to take a good stede.

The Vigydja turned, when the dancers, the frikers, began to dance around the pole house. She took hold of the clasp on the small door that led into the post house. Out of the post house came a very red light and light girl just reddish of freckles all over her body. The red gossamer freckles shone in the sunshine. In the hair and on her body, she had ash and was wearing a very simple, anfald, or onefold, outfit of dried seaweed. Geirwald could not quite understand if the suit was made of seaweed or not. Geirwald asked Krigerdorfer who slowly nodded in agreement and kept on watching the bylaws of the Angles.

The reddish girl with freckles stood on the small ledge and the Vigydja signed to the bearers of the forbedd, the stretcher, to come. Nine men wore a six-sided forbedd, a stretcher of lambskins. They went to the post house and bore the forbedd all the way up so that the red-freckles girl could get on board. They reached nearly up to the ledge when they stretched the forbedd on straight arms.

She boarded the lowered forbedd and they carried her down to the lagoon.

Well at the fullwayed puddle, the bearers waited a little before they stepped into the water. They bore the forbedd at shoulder height and carried on until they all came under water, then they lowered the stretcher so that the light red-freckles girl also came under water. The first part of the lathering had begun.

The water cleaned the ash from her and the cloth of sea-weed swand in the water. The bearers lifted and lowered her trice times three times, still being under water. Then she swam to the shore where the Rod of Njård stood. The iron water had yielded a reddish glow that strengthened her already very red bright, beorht, light.

She stood twenty-seven feet in front of the Njård-rod.

The six Vigydjas loosened the white clads and began with the same way of lashing to wrap the white clads around the shimmering red girl.

When they wrapped the red freckles girl, Geirwald saw how the cloths were wrapped tightly tightly around her awesome body and that it would quite clearly be a strain when the clads began to dry. The red glow shone through the white clads.

Geirwald could not understand where the bearers had gone. After they stepped into the puddle, they had swund, disappeared. The forbedd, the stretcher floated to the water outward, but the carriers had swund, Geirwald said assured to Kriegerdorfer that it must be due to witchcraft. Kriegerdorfer replied that he thought that it was not witchcraft, but the carriers swinding had its reason. Kriegerdorfer said he wanted to take a closer look the puddle, but first he would steal the gold.

When the reddish girl was ready-wrapped, two men came and lifted her and carried her up to the post house. Another pole ladder had been raised against the post house and they could climb up and put her in the post house, whereupon the door was locked and sealed.

The evening grew and the sun waned more and more, yet did

Geirwald felt the light strongly. The business in the Anglian Village slowed. Only a small number of boats went out to groom for tomorrow events in the narrowest sound of the Anguls bay. The Aesirs laid and waited in smyltness, quietly so no one would see them. Chief Walter himself had said that no trips would be allowed. To break the behest of Chiefs Walter, the man was to be lashed, and the punishment, the pinung, would be carried out by Kellner who shook his head so the boils slobbered against each other. After the men had seen Kellner shaking his head and the festers they understood that it was not a good idea to break the orders of Chief Walter.

Geirwald thought of Love. He wanted her. He had never felt this in his entire life. Every time he thought of Love, he became hot in his heart. Geirwald turned around and looked up into the darkening sky.

Some day he must see her again. He simply must. Geirwald fell asleep with a smile on his ansyn. Hradbart threw sour glances on Geirwald and thought that Geirwald should not smile as Geirwald had behaved.

Kriegerdorfer shook life into Geirwald. The Angles had mapped out in their boats and went to the Anguls narrowest straits. Where would all the six Anglian tribes meet to commit Feast, which they did every Saturday. The lathering was holy, both the inner and the outer lathering. Both body and hug.

Chief Walter ordered the main strength would lie in attack mode in the immediate vicinity of the village while Kriegerdorfer and Geirwald and another Hallstatt-man named Schimler would watch the Angles and if need be riding at full gallop to warn the Aesir army if the Angles would suddenly come back to the village. Having six

Anglian tribes swarming around the honey hive, would not be good

Chief Walter thought.

Geirwald, Kriegerdorfer and Schimler crept slowly along the coastal edge.

Further north, they hid the horses. When they took away the horses they

Anguls back towards shore. Cautiously they crept up on a hill and peeked over the little mountain. Geirwald felt giddy by what he saw. The sight was fully awesome. Small boats were everywhere. On both sides of the beach Anglers stood in fullwayed lines, dressed for Saturday's lathering. Geirwald was struck by the splendor. Some of the cloths were adorned with the dearest stones, others had a jumble of holy signs.

Kriegerdorfer muttered something that it looked like a fortune when the Angles went around with all the gold on them. He thought that they would have attacked here instead, but changed his mind when he saws the manyfold in both the number people and the plentyness of equipment the Angles had brought with them.

Geirwald, saw the Angles had lined up tribe by tribe. Three tribes on each shore. Three on the other shore. The boats moored in tribe by tribe.

Geirwald, Kriegerdorfer and Schimler saw Angles below had their eyes focused straight ahead. The Angles did not guess that they were watched. Geirwald did not want to think of what the Angles what to do with them if the Aesirs were caught. The Chief Walter band watched with the highest level of caution.

They had planned an escape route if needed, and they did not know if the Angles had access to horses.

A roar grew. Geirwald could not hear from where it came from. The roar roared deafening. Geirwald thought for a while that even the boats moved because of the noise. From the south shore came a boat with nine rowers and a Vigydja in the bow and one Vigydja in the stern, until the boat reached mid Angul. From the other side came a likening boat. The two Vigydjorna greeted each other and then all the boats changed position.

The boats were between twenty to ten feet long, had anywhere from three to eighteen rowers, some equipped with mast aft wind, others did not have. All however, had the bow and stern embellishment and had were mayed, tied, with spring leaves. In the masts were holy sign, sun crosses, rounds, triangles, mazes, rings wrought thrice around the arm , Rods, neck-rings, shields with ring ornaments.

Geirwald gasped for breath of the manyfold of things and equipment on show. The Anglian tribes seemed to match each other, who could show the greatest splendor.

When all the boats swapped, the two head boats with the Vigydjas met up bow to bow. The slightly younger Vigydja, took a huge bronze shield with finely hammered rounds, lifted it high over her head. She held it high, waited a while and enjoyed the moment. A murmur was heard among all the partakers. She looked around and leaned backwards and tossed the bronze shield into the Angul's deep water.

The second Vigydja in the other boat was ready. She was tall and thin, well marked chin, combed back dark-brown blond hair, lifted a pitcher with a holy drink. Geirwald asked Schimler if he knew what was in the jug, but Schimler just shook his head.

The Vigydja held the jug with both hands, gave a long ode, stooped forward and let the pot with the drink slowly and worthy slid down into the water. Stillness. All the Anglers stood or sat in smyltness.

Geirwald reckoned this feast had something to do with the foremother s and the forefather s of the Anglers. He knew that the Angles love their bylaws, wonts and doings

And they worshiped munned, remembered their kins.

Then and only then put Geirwald behold the stock works from the south shore led straight out of Angul. The stock work could be a hundred twenty foot of length and had been built with oak logs and lashed with deer sinews.

The stock work was mayed, adorned with spring all the colorful flowers, this day, to be worshiped. The water was the link and the megi of the speech and the swop of new thoughts. The Angul bay was the bay that tied the Angles and the other tribes together, so it seemed natural that all the Latherings along the old Sidr in any way would link to the water.

Now Geirwald recognized the shimmering red woman. She was carried on a stretcher, the forbedd as earlier in the day, but the carriers had been replaced. Geirwald still had not understood of their magic swinding in the holy puddle. The holy goddess Njårds fullwayed Walk swayed gracefully along the

Anguls beach, followed by rattling blocks. Finally they reached the beginning of the stock works. Worthy the nine bearers stepped up on the stock works logs, which had a width of nine feet.

Although it was still quite light, the Angles had lit torches to give a special light to this their most holy Feast.

Step by step they went forward, swaying, well-rehearsed and smiling.

Geirwald could not understand that the carriers in such a grave fullwayed Walk had the right to smile. They should be scared to death, they should show full fear of Wotan. If alike behavior was shown at a Fullwayed Walk to the god Mercury, Wotan or Cernunnos honor, all the carriers should have had to pay with their lives, and after having been duly punished with all manifold pinung in Hel and perhaps even in Nifel-Hel . Geirwald carried on to be awed by Vanirs kindness and joy. Perhaps it was the kindness of galdrar and Seid, perhaps was kindness and joy a weapon the Mercurius gods could not cure.

Geirwald wondered where kindness and joy had gone in his own tribe. He could not mun, remember a moment of joy and mirth. Perhaps joy brought forth the crafting megi with which the Vanirs crafted and created all awesomely beautiful things, holy stuff and everyday things.

He watched how, the with bronze things gracefully adorned stretcher, the forbedd, and the carriers and Goddess Njård in the shape of the shimmering red girl, had reached the end of the stock works. The girl's thin white woolen cloth so tightly around her body to Geirwald thought she looked more like a butterfly chrysalis. It struck him that perhaps it was what was meant. A kenning with nature, as the worm turns into a beautiful butterfly. At the front was built Angles ring of the stock on which, a very large number of Vigydjas and Vigothis were gathered, in their yellow robes. They held a rope with eighty-one knots, a bowline, the knot, where the goddess comes up in the middle.

When the Gydjas raised the rope with the knots, the forbedd with all the carriers and the Goddess slid down into the water in the middle of stock works. Everything was done in smyltness.

When forbedd with the goddess was halfway in the water, a Hofgydja in red cloth, with golden arm rings, sun signs, magic mazes and a hair net with polished amber, took a bucket of water and poured water over her left shoulder down her back. All the others Vigydjas did the same.

Geirwald heard muffled dins. Han could not make out where the dins came from.

He thought it sounded like someone or likely many banged on the stock work poles. The sound gave a dark sultry sound that felt throughout his body, although the dins were so far away from the event.

The goddess forbedd went down into the depths. The carriers clothes became wetter and wetter, so also the Goddess Njårds stand-in. Geirwald found the reddish girl looked clearly relieved when the water soaked up the white broadcloth, stretched to the breaking point . Slowly and with awe the forbedd sank in the middle of the stock works. In the end, only the Goddess Njårds head was behold. One more step and the head had also swund. The sound from the droplet from her swinding became small ripples that spread out to the edges of the stock works. The Angles were standing on their knees and with their buckets they gathered the small waves. Then they poured water with the bucket, the same way as before, over the left shoulder. Then they made a ring-shaped motion with the left hand. Geirwald understood that it was the sign for `peace and good harvest 'Ars og Fridur'.

In the same manner as before the bearers swand. They just had swund in the same unbelievable way as last time. Geirwald was fully convinced that it was magic, that Anglernas Seid and galdrar took power

to enthrall all who came in their way. Schimler told Geirwald to calm down, but Schimler had clearly also become scared.

Kriegerdorfer clenched his hands in anger and showed how he would turn the neck of Geirwald if he did not keep quiet in the future.

Geirwald fell still and kept on watching the show.

Everyone who had a hand on the rope that ran around the stock works and that was kept in a bowline and whose loop led down to a large network, lifted the rope.

The water was running off the stretcher, the forbedd, and the Goddess Njård, she came back out the Sea. Her rebirth took place. With eighty-one ropes the Angles lifted their goddess out of the sea. The shimmering red girl sat on her knees with her hands over her breasts. The white broadcloth was around her on the stretcher. She was naked aside from the double neck-rings around her neck and the rings in her ears. Black strokes of coal marked her red Mornir. She hugged the milk-fueled breasts and the milk ran down her body. She leaned her head back and her hands pressed against her breasts, even more life-giving milk ran along her slender body. The muffled sound quivered in the air.

With eighty-one knotted ropes Angles lifted their Goddess. The full power felt strong and they turned to the south shore and began the retreat on stock works. As the stock works ring narrowed, took the Gydjas and the Gothis pulled the ropes. This way the net always remained stretched. When they reached the shore they began to sing. High and loud songs were heard along as they marched up the south shore beaches.

They marched eastwards. Geirwald and his two companions could see the whole Tow, the process from their hiding place. The Angles bore the Goddess Nerthus on the net forbedd during stormy singing. They walked for a while and came to a bay on which there was half-island that only had a small glimmer of land linked with the mainland. The half-island's dark green lushness vaulted its leaves over the island's beaches. Geirwald could barely behold what dwelled in the greenery. Between the green leaves and nine holy oaks Geirwald view a wagon with curtains. The wagons side panels had unbelievable embellishments and Geirwald recognized the sun signs, moons, rounds , magic mazes. The size of the wheelset made Geirwald surprised. He had thought that no one could make such large wheels. The vanir-craft was clearly greater than he had thought of. The Angles with the forbedd stopped at the beach. From the island's greenery, from nowhere a Vigothi came up. Lanky, clad in a golden dress, yellowed hair, clean-shaven, but aged and furrowed. His ansyn was tanned and so were his hands. He had all his fingers left. The Hofgydja shouted something Geirwald could not hear. Then he saw how the Hofgydjan stretched out her arms against Vigothi who did likewise. Vigothi walked at a brisk step over the land-streak and came to the fullwayed walk. Then he went back. No one else was entering the Holy Island. Only one allowed Gothi had the allowance to stay on the Goddess Njårds Holy island when the Gothi died, a new one took his place. The Vigothi spent all his time that is all his life at the Njårds Holy wagon. If something happened to the Holy wagon, then he would pay with his life. The Angles gave the Vigothi food as they stood at the small land-streak, for no one had set foot on the Holy Island.

No one was allowed to the holy island.

The Vigothi led the Njårds Holy wagon, drawn by two well-fed cows.

Arriving at the Feast, at the fullwayed walk, the trolley stopped. The forbedd was put in line.

The rear stern of forbedd was raised and the front lowered. The Vigothi walked up to the front and stretched out his arms. Suddenly all the lost carriers showed up like magic. Geirwald could not understand whence they had come. Carriers stood in the half-moon ring around the bottom of the forbedd. The Hofgydja threw out her arms in a galdered move and the forbedd got even bigger slope. The shimmering red girl rolled straight into the arms of the revived bearers who carried her to the Njårds Holy wagon. The Vigothi lifted the veil and put her in the wagon, and then went back to the forbedd to retrieve her white broadcloth.

The Vigothi took the lead and led the wagon forward. Five of the carriers went behind the carriage, four were between the cows and the Vigothi. The Vigothi showed the road and the wagon shook up over fields and trails to visit the six Anglian tribes, to give them happiness and wealth, Ars og Fridur.

If the Goddess Njård did not the fields the harvest would fail. The fact that tempted the fate would be tantamount to death.

Each tribe and each Holy field would be visited by the Goddess Njård.

When the Goddess Njård awed the harvest, the fields and the fruitfulness, then Fridur ruled, then no war, no fight took place. After the awing the Goddess Njård returned to her holy island, The Vigothi and the bearers came back to the Holy Island to fulfill the holy bylaw called lathering of the wagon, the cloth, the curtain, the bearers, Her stand-in and wooden Rod that stood for the goddess Njård, that always, was on the Holy Island but no one saw. All and all the were lathered in the water around the holy Island. The bearers swam well below the water to come up in another bay. By this doing they were cleaned, that is, lathered and could take up their everyday doings without shame.

Only the watchful and watching Vigothi was entitled to touch the holy Rod that was a token for the goddess Njård. No one had seen this wooden Rod. Geirwald tried to get a view of the wooden Rod among the lush green trees on the lush island. Suddenly he found himself boggling.

What if he became enthralled by the Goddess Njård if he could view of the wooden Rod. Geirwald looked away at once, appalled at his insight, but glad to not have been enthralled by witchcraft.

Meanwhile, Chief Walters's men made their way to the village and made themselves ready to attack. Slowly but surely they crawled out and surrounded the village at the Anguls beginning. Only a few people were left and made a manifold of tasks. Everyone else was out on the roads and took part the Goddess Njårds swing. A couple of women cleaned the earthen floors, a couple of older men threw stone dices and waved bushy hands for each outcome of luck or unlucky throws. The calm reigned.

Chief Walter had deemed to attack. He had seen that his men had crawled almost to in the village. Hradbart, Kellner and another twenty men lay on the east side, while Chief Walter Kaisper and the others laid scattered on the west side. Chief Walter and Hradbart had eye contact. Chief Walter looked around and saw that all was in place, then he nodded and the Aesirs stood up like a man and rushed into the village with drawn swords. The Angles were fully taken by surprise. The women dropped their pottery with fear and just stood fully still. The older men who played rock dice came suddenly on their feet and ran into the woods.

Hradbart rushed straight at one of the women and cut her in two parts with his sword. Blood spurted like a spring flood. Kaisper ran as fast as he could to the Rod in the middle of the village and began to climb up to chop off the cast-gold bracelets. Utter scare and dread spread rapidly in the village. All screamed and ran back and forth.



The children had luckily been brought to the Anguls cliffs to view the doings, to cun everything by heart, until it was their turn to take over.

Some older women screamed with raging madness. The Hallstatt warriors rushed into houses and grabbed the wealthy things they could find. Kellner tried climb the pole house but the pole ladder broke. Kellner became quite furious and began to hit the pole building poles in order to overturn the entire house.

He snorted and screamed but no pole gave way. He rushed in and got hold of a young woman who had been hiding in a longhouse.

He pulled her out and took her to the post house. She trembled of fright.

Her thin cheeks turned white of fear, and she fainted. Her tunic, which reached down to the knees, were broken grated by Kellner's harsh treatment. He shouted at her that she would climb up and retrieve all valuables. She held her hands to her ansyn and kept weeping. Kellner gave her a hard slap. She took away his long bright red hair and pointed to the broken pole ladder.

Kellner screamed and jumped with both feet in anger. He shouted something she did not understand. He calmed down, however. He looked at her. She seemed so unbelievable small matched with him, this huge man. She weighed a third of his weight.

Suddenly he pushed her onto her back. He then took a firm grip about her ankles and began to spin her. The red-haired girl screamed of fear. Her red hair fluttered in the wind as she spun round and round. They went faster and faster. She tried in vain to cover her body by holding the tunic while defending her head that sometimes touched the ground when Kellner spun around.

Kellner got up to speed and the little red-haired woman flew in an bow up against the pole and hit the house edge. She bumped into the thigh and struck her head, and was lying on the ledge. When Kellner understood what has happened, he became even more angry and began throwing stones at her while he yelled at her to throw down all the valuables.

She pulled slowly onto the inner of the ledge when she came to her senses.

She looked down at the wild Kellner who waved his arms and showed all his might. She took off the hasp of the door and went into the post house and locked the door from inside. She was not an awed Vigydja and therefore had no right to be in the holy place, but what could she do.

Suddenly Kellner got something else to think of. The nave, from which he had pulled the red-haired girl had begun to burn. The fire spread quickly. Chief Walter ordered immediate retreat.

The flames licked already Kellner clothes and he roared of anger and harm.

Hradbart arrived with arms full of gold and valuables.

Kaisper did not go on to chop while keeping itself in the Rod. He cursed his bad luck. Chief Walter now had realized the danger. Such a large fire would soon attract the Angles and then there would be trouble. He signed to Kaisper to end looting and return.

Kellner looked at Kaisper that was not ready and Kellner thought that Kaisper should not get any loot unless he Kellner could get something. Kellner smiled and took a comfortable stone and threw it away in the back on Kaisper who roared in pain and went back. Kellner picked up Kaipers sword and gave it to him and smiled.

The Aesirs pulled back just as quickly as they had struck. The village was plundered and looted. More than one longhouse were burned and they would take long time to fix all the damages .

The older men had made their way to the cult site's beaches to alert the Angles, which had already began moving towards the smoke, they had understood that something had happened.

Kriegerdorfer, Schimler and Geirwald had put up the horse and rode off to the meeting place. The rode quickly to get away, but without hurry. Kreigerdorfer rode first then Schimler and finally Geirwald. Kriegerdorfer who was a skilled rider led the small scout force beyond Grumby to Satrup.

They carried on until they reached the coast at Gelting. There they had made up about meeting Chief Walters men.

They had to wait another half day and then came the great majority of the aesir-here, with lavish loads of gold rings, sun signs, amber grind and rough, cloths, bronze drums, arrows, dearest flint and much more that they had grabbed during their attack of the Angulsby.

Hradbart shone like the sun. He had managed to gather the most valuables.

Once they were reunited, Chief Walter gave orders to continue the rape and plunder trip northwards. He wanted to reach to the town Tanum which was known for its treasures and holy things in gold. Then they would return home, for they could not carry too much. They would then become an easy prey of looters on their way home to Hallstatt.

-You can not trust anyone these days, Chief Walter said to Geirwald, and shook his head and kept on.

-It was better when it was not so many who went on plunder.

Now it's an awfully legwork when plundering, Chief Walter said and grieved.

From Gelting they continued riding along the coast up. They rounded

Gulf and passed Kollund and then move on to Gråsten and over the half-island. They rode fairly hard to do as large length as possible between themselves and the Angles.

The Angles had, however, quickly returned to the village and deemed to take up the hunt for Chief Walters raiders. They had launched six fast boats with about twenty men and two women. They rowed quickly up along the bay of Anguls and understood that the Aesir rape and plunder trip would continue upwards. They went ashore at Al's south shore where the villagers told that the Aesirs had ridden past the gray stone and were on their way up.

The seafarers continued upwards to warn the other vanir tribes of the nearing danger of the plundering southerners. The Angles assumed that Chief Walter would continue straight up and therefore went ashore in Halk, Stenderup and Daugård.

Chief Walter who always had a fox behind each ear, thus he was very sly, told the Aesirs -here to steal boats in Haderslev and with the help of these boats transport the horses, the equipment, the replacement and supplies over the Little Belt to the island Funen.

The horses were put ashore, and ridden over the island Fyn, while the boats continued around Funen. Chief Walter did not like to have horses in the boats. He did not like water and wanted as little sea-fare as possible. Also, the horses became restless on the lake. Geirwald saw that the army became un-easy

each time it was time for the sea. The reason was very simple. Not many could swim. Geirwald, however, was a good swimmer which he had already shown along the way.

He longed to return to Hallstatt. But when he searched his mind the longing was not so great. He had been through so much this rape and plunder trip. He had a look around in a way that few other Hallstattbor had seen throughout their whole living. He would become an esteemed

Story-teller when he came home, if he came home. Did he want to go home ?.

Hallstatt was overcrowded and he really had nothing to come home to. The farm was too small. His brothers had taken all the land. But where would he go?

He had time to ponder as he sat on horseback or leading the horse of the Funen green grasslands.

Chief Walter decided to ship the army straight from Fyn to Sjælland. He had a feeling that they were followed but still had no followers had been seen. They avoided any involvement with villages and tribes not to be viewed. They were lucky, the weather on the lake stayed and did not cause any major problem except that Kaisper became so seasick that he threw to windward with the outcome that Kaispers maw spew ended up inside her serk of Kriegerdorfer who answered by pressing a sculpin in Kaisper's half open, sunder-spewed mouth. To get real pleasure from the punishment, the pinung, Kriegerdorfer took grasp of the Kaisper's neck and pushed down the sculpin in the throat with his thumbs. Kaisper looked blue and green at the same time. The eyes of Kaisper went around and around and he moaned even more. Hradbart, Schimler and Kellner bet on how long it would take before the sculpin came up.

Kellner had just thrown in a couple of nice pieces of flint in the betting pot when Kaisper turned on his hairy body and hung again over the railing, loudly moaning. This time Kaisper spewed in lee. This was much better all the other thought. No spew blowing in the wind. Kaisper's power might had got yet another blow.

The power- fight stood between Kriegerdorfer and Hradbart, who was second chief after Chief Walter.

In the same way as the army rounded Fyn, that is, by letting the horses ride over the island and the boats sail around, they rounded also Sealand and arrived to the Helsing Ör, where ÖR meant dune. The boats were brought forward and again the inland folks were forced to travel on the water against their will.

Well over on the mainland the Aesirs carried on their journey to Tanum. Chief Walter awaited a large loot from Tanum, but wondered at the same time how well armed Tanum villagers might be.

Meanwhile, the Angles understood that the asa-here would not go over Jutland. They set the course for Sealand and became enlightened that the Aesir-here had crossed the strait and was on its way towards Tanum. The six boats put on the helm and put the new course towards Tanum.

## Chapter 19 - LOVE, QUEEN OF LOVE AND EARTH

Love takes “dreamham”.

The group had returned to Noatun after a short view and worship at the Drombeg stone round at Cork.

The Rosers let out at sea.

Love sat in the boat. She saw the waterline far away. The boat waggled slowly.

She felt awake and asleep at the same time. She felt herself like one with the boat and the sea.

She shivered a little when the mild wind blew her in the ansyn. The long waves slowly rocked her to drowse. She began dreaming, she when into a ham. She took “dreamham” !

### 1<sup>st</sup> YGGDRASIL THE WORLD TREE AND LOVE’S HOUSE

During the first nine days.

The very first day.

During the nine first nights when everything was created.

When the bylaws were awed in the holy places

When the goddess was greeted in the Hearn and the Weoh.

When the harvest was awed or fullwayed in the Lund and the Hult.

When Ull, the Sun God shone over the earth.

When Njörd, the Earth Goddess took Ulls rays to evoke life.

When the Lady of the great down-under, Hel grasped her kingdom.

When Njord, the god of the sea and wisdom, put sails.

Then, at that time, a tree was planted, Yggdrasil, at the coast of Alvhem.

The tree was fed by the river that flowed through

Alvhem, the eastern part of the vanir land.

Love fed the tree with her own hands, along her

Mother Njörds wise advice, the wise raed.

Love tended the tree and gave it water along her Mother’s raed.

Love handled the tree like her own house and flattened the earth around the tree with her feet, as her mother had said.

Love asked herself;

How long will it be until I get a great high seat?

How long will it be until I get a shiny bed?

The years went. First nine years, then eighteen. Yggdrasil grew but became neither high seat nor bed.

More haps revealed themselves in Love's garden.

The snake Nidhögg gnawed at Yggdrasil's root. In the top of the ashtree the hawk Vedrfolder sat, pale by wind and weather.

The squirrel Ratatosk ran between the snake Nidhögg and the hawk

Vedrfolder and brokered words of envy.

Love could not master the tree and its inmates.

Love cried, Love who loved laughter and gayness, she cried.

The earth-mother Njörd urged her to let everything remain as it was and feed the tree as before.

Against her Mother's will, Love fared to the warrior Bremen and allured him to chop down the tree to make the high seat and bed.

Bremen took it gracefully ornamented bronze ax about 77 pounds and went to Love's garden.

Bremen did wield bronze ax, the mighty way-cleaner, against

Yggdrasil's bark.

Nidhögg and Vedrfolder fled closely followed by Ratatosk, who all the time hissed swearwords against Bremen;

"It will be a new tree in the same place. So it will always be.

Your work is vain" Ratatosk said before he swand into the Woods.

Of the tree Bremen cut out a high seat and a shining bed.

Of the top leaves tree Love made a wreath to Bremen.

The earth-mother Njörd wept long with grief, but she knew it was to happen. She and Love must split. Love was almost full grown. It hurt her heart, in the bark, in the hug.

## 2<sup>nd</sup>. LOVE AND THE WISDOM GOD

She, Love put the Brisingamen of gold around her neck and its splendor shone far and wide.

She went to Stone-Hearg. She visited the grove.

As she leaned against the holy oak in the holy grove her womb was wonderful to behold.

The young woman, Love, praised and gladden herself of her wonderful Mornir.

Love said;

I, Love the Queen of Earth and Love will visit Njord the sea and wisdom God. I will go to Noatun in Vanhem.

I will awe the God Kvaser with a visit.

In Noatun Love and Njord drank mead together. They drank the holy brew called the mead of Wisdom.

This mead was brewed by another Van, the God Kvaser.

Njord and Love both drank mead, kvas and beer.

They drank bowl after bowl.

They drank from the large kettle Odrörrer.

They clinked the glasses.

They challenged each other.

Drunk of Kvaser, Njord drank mead and quothed a the toast to Love;

"In the name of my power. In the name of my holy Hærg.

I give Love the high rank Vigydja, the high Gydjarank.

The Gydessness.

The crown of the noble forbearance .

The Kingdom to you, you awesome Guena. "

Love answered;

"I beget your gifts."

Njord lifted the bowl and foresetted Loves second bowl;

"In the name of my power. In the name of my holy Hærg.

I give Love:

Truth.

Waning into the underworld.

Waxing from the underworld.

The windsome lovemaking.

The Kissing of Völse.

The Mornir glee. "

Love answer;

"I beget your gifts."

Then stood Love for Her Father Ull and allowed the holy seid as Njord had given her.

"My father gave me this holy Seid:

He gave me the high Gydjarank

He gave me the Gydessness.

He gave me the crown of noble forbearance.

He gave me the kingdom.

He gave me the wealthy ring. Ulls of gold.

He gave me shield of the boat. The shield of Ull.

He gave me the holy ell and the holy pole.

He gave me the high seat.

He gave me the truth.

He gave me waning into the underworld, Hel.

He gave me waxing from the underworld, Hel.

He gave me the Hugin, the Nordic soul. The Hug.

He gave me the Mugin, the Nordic memory. The Mun.

He gave me the awesome ax, the way-maker.

He gave me the black robe.

He gave me the red –ochra cloth .

He gave me the skill to love.

He gave me Mornir's lewdness.

He gave me the kiss of Völse.

He gave me the lust.

He gave me the straightforward speech.

He gave me the Suttung mead.

He gave me the bard's tongue.

He gave me the earthly Gydja-rank.

He gave me the brawling bronze-lures.  
He gave me the heady drums.  
He gave me the tinkling bells.  
He gave me the horny rattles.  
He gave me the holy Weoh. The holy "We"  
He gave me the power skill.  
He gave me the art of betrayal.  
He gave me the heart's delights.  
He gave me the rebellious mind.  
He gave me the Ydalir's warrant.  
He gave me woodcarver Olaf's skill.  
He gave me the smith Völund's skill.  
He gave me the beat of the stonemason Slagfinn.  
He gave me the listening ear.  
He gave me the skill to listen.  
He gave me the holy bylaws of lathering.  
He gave me the fear.  
He gave me the dismay.  
He gave me the outrage.  
He gave me the skill to make fire.  
He gave me the skill to quench the fire.  
He gave me the overall kinship.  
He gave me lewd.  
He gave me the split.  
He gave me the healing.  
He gave me the good advice, the raed  
He gave me the dooms.  
He gave me the mighty reads. "



### 3rd WEDDING BETWEEN LOVE AND ING

Love opened the door to Ing.

Inside the house, she called for him the light from the moon.

The moon light enlightened her Mornir and chest.

Ing looked at her with delight.

He pressed his neck against her.

He kissed her.

Love said:

"What I say to you, the singer weaves into a song.

What I say to you, let it travel from ear to mouth, let it travel from old to young.

My bosom, my Mornir

The Earth vessel, is full of yearning, like the new moon.

My un-ploughed fields lie fallow.

What happens in me, Love?

Who will plow my Mornir?

Who will plow my deep field?

Who will plow my wet ground?

What happens in me, the horny woman?

Who will plow my Mornir?

Who will put Völse in place?

Who will plow my womb? "

Ing answered:

"My Queen, Völse will plow your Mornir.

I, ING, the king, shall plow your womb. "

Love:

" Then Plough my Mornir, my heart's husband.

Plow my womb. "

Völse raised at the King's thighs.

The plants grew high around them

The corn grew high around them

Ars og Fridur, good harvest and peace.

Love sang:

Völse have run out, Völse has spun.

He is a water lily that grows in the water.

Völse is the Mornir loves the most.

My well-stocked garden of the plain.

My grain grows high in the grooves.

Völse is a water lily that grows in the water.

My honey husband, my man of honey

That always gives me sweetness.

My stallion, the gods honey Völse

He is the one my womb loves best.

His hand is honey, his limb is honey,

He always gives me sweetness.

My ardent, bold caresser of the navel;

My caresser, the bold caresser of the navel,

My caresser of the smooth thighs.

The Völse is the one, that Mornir loves the most.

He is water lily that grows in the water. "

Ing sang:

"My Lady, your breast is your field.

Love, your breasts make me drunk of lust.

Your broad field is flowing of seeds.

The water flows down from high for your thrall.

Let it flow to me, Love.

Let it flow over me, Love.

Let it flow like a spring flood

I drink anything you give me. "

Love said:

"I put plants, linen, in front of him.

I groom the plants, the Laukar, above, and in him.

I put the seeds in front of him.

I poured seeds in front of him.

I let the grain flow from my womb. "

Love sang:

"Last night when I, the queen, shone brightly, last night when I, the Queen of the Earth, called for clear,

When I shone clear and danced, I sang a quoth to the coming of the night,

When he met me, then he thrust into me.

My lord Ing met me.

My stud Ing, thrust into me.

He put his hand in my hand

He pressed his breasts against my chest.

My High Gothi is ready for the holy Mornir.

My lord Ing is ready for the holy womb.

The Völse gleam of Mornirs juices.

Ing, your fulfillment is my gladness.

I felt the rush of awe when

The river of seeds, which were spread in the sign of Freya

In my womb.

Let Mornir beget these gifts.

Let Mornir beget these bounties.

I fullwayed about it, I asked for it, I asked for the camp.

I asked for the camp that gives heart happiness.

I asked for the camp that fills Mornir with seeds.

I asked for a king's camp.

I asked for a queen's camp

Love asked for the bed of love:

"Groom the camp that gives heart joy.

Groom the camp that fills Mornir with seeds.

Groom the king's camp.

Groom the Queen's camp.

Groom Ulls and Njårds camp.

Groom the Sun and Earth's camp. "

Love trimmed the bridal bed sheet over love, the Wig-bed of love.

She called on the King Ing.

"The camp is sorted"

Love allured Ing to the Wig-bed.

"The Wig-bed is waiting"

He put his hand in hers.

He put his hand against her heart.

Sweet is the sleep hand in hand.

Still sweeter is sleeping heart to heart

The sweetest is Völse sleeping with Mornir.

Now my beloved is filled.

During the night the father's sister Night of the Wolf and with her garment, she lights the stars on the night sky.

When Ulls rays raises lovers.

Then Ing says:

"Let me free, my friend, let me free.

I want to go to the Hærg .

I must go to the Hærg

Let me free. "

Ing went.

#### 4th LOVE'S WANING TO HEL AND WAXING FROM HEL

Love mourned her lost love.

The Evil power had struck its claws in Ing.

Love listening to the Earth.

Love listening to the Heaven.

Love left the Earth and the Heaven to go to the bottom of the underworld.

Love left her holy rank as Gydja to wane down into the underworld.

In her entourage followed nine Vigydjas as awed the bylaw at

Each shrine, each Hærg, each Weoh

In Visby Love left the Weoh to wane into the underworld.

In Fröslunda Love left the Lund to wane into the underworld.

In Älgshult Love left the Hult to wane into the underworld.

In Hærg Love left the Hærg to wane into the underworld.

In Tuna Love left the Hof to wane into the underworld.

In Kåtorp Love left her ship to wane into the underworld.

On Kinnekulle Love walked down the mountain to wane into the underworld.

In Bro Love did leave the Settra-house at the right time to wane into the underworld.

Love had nine healing galdars of the Goddess Eir.

Love took the nine galdars in her hand.

Strengthened by the healing herbs she was grooming to wane.

The settra, who dresses them to undergo a ritual, put Ulls ring on Love.

Three laps of gold around her arm.

The settra fastened Love's hair with Fullas golden hair-band that got  
Love's golden curls to shine even more and even more.  
Love was bedecked with a tusk wild boar from Frey's boar bristle Gyllenborst  
Love let the settra paint the holy sign the Hvitlycke-stone-carving on the chest.  
The Freya sun from the stone-carving at Aspeberget was painted on her forehead.  
Three cup marks on each breast and  
Three above Mornir, nine in all.  
The Settra put the round bronze buckle on Love's the rope skirt.  
Finally the settra gave Love the holy measures;  
One old Ell, of 20 inches from the king and a quarter rod, 28 inches.  
Love went to the underworld.  
Beyla, who helps Frey with the grinding, went with her.  
Love said to Beyla:  
Beyla, you are my faithful staunch.  
My advisor that gives me good advice, good raed-  
I will wane to hell, the underworld.  
If I do not come back,  
Fetch a twain of bronze-lures and let them sound widely .  
Drum the drums in the holy Hearnghs.  
Walk around the house of the Gods and Goddesses.  
Hit yourself with the twigs of Willow so that the redness makes the Willows blush.  
Dress in sackcloth and ashes.  
Head to Tisslinge, Tyr's abode.  
When you step into his holy place you shall cry  
O Tyre, lord and master, do not let your meeky daughter die in the underworld.  
Do not let the Earth's holy Gydja die in the underground.  
Do not let Love come to Nifelhel.  
If Tyr does not want to help you,

Then go to Laufey to find Lopt, the farer in the air.

Weep for Lopt.

If Lopt, the farer in the air, does not want to help you.

Then go to Noatun at the Sea and the wisdom god Njord.

Weep for Njord.

Njord knows all waters.

Njord knows all the reefs.

He will help you to sail right.

Love went down to Hel.

Love stopped, turned and said;

"Now go Beyla.

Forget not what I asked you "

Love went for nine nights and could not see anything until she came to the river Gjall.

Love goes over the Gjallar-bridge coated with shining gold.

Love comes to the outer doors of Hel.

Love bangs on the doors.

She calls out to Modgunn, the Hel-guard at the gate.

Modgunn asked:

"Who are you? From what clan are you? "

Love answered:

"I am of the vanirs kin. My name is Love. The Goddess of Love. "

On the way to the East. "

Modgunn asked:

"If you are truly love, the Goddess of Love, heading east. why has your heart led you to Hel, whence no traveler, no farer returns. "

Love answers:

"Because power has struck his claws in my Love Ing.

The stud Völse has slackened. The teemer of Mornir has died.

Let the mead from his awed burial walk pour into the bowl. "

Modgunn answered:

I'll bring over your message. "

Modgunn stepped into Hel's great hall. The Queen of Hel-dom sat on a black throne. Hel, the hidden, half gray blue half flesh-colored, looked grimly at Modgunn.

Modgunn said:

"Queen Hel, a goddess by the name of Love

The Goddess of Love, is waiting at Hel's outer gate.

Love brings the nine healing galdars from Eir

The Goddess of Healing.

Ulls ring from Ull the Sun God.

The wild boar tusks from Frey's boar bristle Gyllenborst.

The golden headband of Fulla.

The bronze-buckle with carved magic mazes.

The rope skirt from the Lunda-gydja.

The holy measures, one Ell from the king and a quarter pole.

And the neck-ring Brisingamen. "

When the hell queen heard this, she shivered of an overwhelming greed. She tore her thighs in flurry.

When she calmed down, she said:

"Modgunn, look here.

Seal the nine doors of Hel.

Then open the door after door.

Let Love come in.

When she comes in, rip off her the Gydja-kirtle.

Love has to walk naked in the halls.

Let the goddess of Love from the earth come in, bent to the ground. "

Modgunn did as her queen had behested.

She sealed the nine doors. Then she opened the outer door

Modgunn said:

"Come into Hel, Love, step inside, you are awaited."



When Love stepped through the first door the nine healing galdars were taken from her.

Love asked:

"What does it mean."

Modgunn rebuked her:

"Stillness, Love, in Hel, in the underground everything is fulfilled."

The fulfillment may not be questioned. "

When Love stepped into the second door

Ulls ring was taken from her arm.

Love asked:

"What does it mean?"

Modgunn rebuked:

"Stillness, Love, in Hel in the underground everything is fulfilled".

The fulfillment can not be questioned. "

When Love stepped through the third door

The wild boar tusks were taken from her.

Love asked:

"What does it mean?"

Modgunn rebuked:

"Stillness, Love, on Hel, in the underworld all is fulfilled.

The fulfillment may not be questioned. "

When Love stepped through the fourth door

Fullas hairband was taken from her hair.

Love asked:

"What does it mean?"

Modgunn rebuked:

"Stillness, Love, in Hel, in the underworld all is fulfilled.

The fulfillment may not be questioned. "

When Love stepped through the fifth gate

The bronze buckle with the magic mazes were taken from her.

Love asked:

"What does it mean?"

Modgunn rebuked:

"Stillness, Love, in Hel, in the underworld all is fulfilled.

The fulfillment may not be questioned. "

When Love came into the sixth gate

The rope skirt of the Lunda-gydja was taken from her.

Love asked:

"What does it mean?"

Modgunn rebuked:

"Stillness, Love, in Hel, in the underworld all is fulfilled.

The fulfillment may not be questioned. "

When Love stepped into the seventh gate

The holy measure, the Ell was taken from her.

Love asked:

"What does it mean?"

Modgunn rebuked:

"Stillness, Love, in Hel, in the underworld all is fulfilled.

The fulfillment may not be questioned. "

When Love stepped through the eighth port

The holy measure the quarter rod was taken from her.

Love asked:

"What does it mean?"

Modgunn rebuked:

"Stillness, Love, in Hel, in the underworld all is fulfilled.

The fulfillment may not be questioned. "

When Love stepped into the ninth gate

The neck-ring Brisingamen was taken from her.

Love asked:

"What does it mean?"

Modgunn rebuked:

"Stillness, Love, in Hel, in the underworld all is fulfilled.

The fulfillment may not be questioned. "

Naked and bent Love comes into the throne hall.

Hel stood up from the throne.

Love walked toward the throne.

She was surrounded by Hyrrokin and her handmaidens that slowly went around her. They doomed her and damned her.

Then Hel threw the tokens of death over Love. To Vergelmer you go.

The doom was clear. Guilty.

The thralls of Hel, Tokk and Hyrrokin grabbed Love's arms.

Hel went towards Love and gave her the last lash with the whip of death.

Love turned into a dead body. Tokk and Hyrrokin hung up

Love in a tree.

When Love had not returned after three times three days, Beyla let the bronze-lures blow and let them sound and din all over the Vanir land.

She beat on the drums in the holy groves.

She surrounded the House of the Gods and Goddesses.

She spanked herself so that the redness made the gods and the goddesses blush.

She put on sackcloth and ashes.

She went to Tisling, Tyr's abode.

She cried:

O Tyr, Lord and Master.

Do not let your meeky daughter die in the underworld.

Do not let the Holy Vi-Gydja die underground.

Do not let Love die in Nifelhel.

Tyr said slyly:

"Love does not belong to my tribe."

Beyla went to Laufey and wept before Lopt, the farer in the air.

Lopt said slyly:

"Maybe she belongs to my tribe, maybe not."

Beyla went to Njord, the Sea and Wisdom God and wept before him.

Njord said:

"Is Love, the Earth queen and the Goddess of Love in Hel?"

What shall we do here in Vanhem? Nothingness will make us crazy. The gray life will hit us. Without love Vanhem will die.

But Love is not yet in Nifelhel. She is only in Hel. Then there still hope. "

Njord sent a messenger, the vana- goddess Gna, who rode the horse Hofvarpner.

Njord behested:

"Gma, ride on the waves of the sea to Hel and get in through a crack in wall where the water seeps into. Water can never be stopped if there is a slope.

Hel, the underworld ruler is alone. She weens always.

Have pity with her. Have pity with Hel.

She is gray-blue, and no cloth is covering her body.

Her breasts are bared.

When she wails: Oh, oh my mind.

You wail too: Oh, oh my mind.

When she wails: Oh, oh my outer body.

Then wail also: Oh, oh my outer body.

Then Queen Hel will be pleased.

She will offer you a gift.

Then you ask her about the dead body hanging from the tree.

Then pour the water of life into her

Love will be born again. "

Gna rode the horse Hofvarpner who rode the waves of the sea until they found the crack in the wall that led to the Nastrand-Hall in Hel.

There Hel sat , with bared breasts and wailed.

"Oh, oh my mind."

GNA squares:

"Oh, oh my mind."

Hel squares:

"Oh, oh my outer!"

Gna squares:

"Oh, oh my outer ""

Hel looked in wonder at Gna.

Hel asked:

"Who are you to whimper and wail with me?"

If you are a goddess, I give you my awe !

If you are a living being, you should get a gift.

You'll get forever prettiness as a thank . "

Gna answered:

" Forever prettiness would give forever envy."

Hel said:

"You shall have forever youth"

Gna answered:

"Forever Youth offers no wisdom"

Hel said:

"Tell me then what you want"

Gna answered:

"I want the dead body hanging from the tree."

Gna got the dead body and laid it on Hofvarpner's back.

Then she poured the water of life over Love's body.

Loves was brought back to life.

When they were on the way to the crack in the rock,

Hyrokkin stopped Love.

Hyrokkin and Tokk said:

"Nobody leaves un-seen from the underworld. If Love wants to leave

Hel, she must find someone to replace her. "

When the Gna and Love left the underworld, they found out that they were stalked by giants.

Giants are not suffering from hunger or thirst.

Giants do not greet drinks of mead.

Giants not lured by Mornir or Völse.

Giants do not have soft babies to hug.

Giants are without feelings.

Giants are without Hug.

Giants who tear the wife from her husband's arms

Giants who tear the child from his father's knee.

Giants who steal the bride from her new home.

The Giants fared around Love.

Giants smelled morning air. They smelled loot.

Here was booty to snatch.

Here was a Hug who had left the harbor, the Ham.

The Mare could engulf the Hug before it had found a new harbor, a new Ham.

Beyla, dressed in sackcloth and ashes, waited outside Vanhems outer doors.

Scared of the giants nearness.

She fell over.

A huge Giant from the mountains opened his mouth and said:

"Love, ride away. We take Beyla as your swop. "

Love answered:

"Hey, Beyla is my faithful staunch . She did not forget what I said.

Thanks to her, my life could be saved. I will never give you Beyla. "

The Mountain Giant said:

"Keep on riding Love, we follow you to Härnevi."

At the shrine in Härnevi Frode stood at the Stallar.

Wearing a Vigodedräkt Frode began to sing a seid-song.

Although he was so frightened when he saw the Giants that he fell over, he kept on singing,

The Mountain Giant said:

"Love, ride to Vanhem. We take Frode in your place. "

Love answered:

"No, he is my son who sings galdars to me.

I will never give you Frode. "

The mountain Giant said:

"Keep on riding Love, we follow you to Ulleraker."

At the shrine of Ulleraker, a Gothi wearing a Lunda-Gothi cloth and was about to sing a seid-song. Although he became so scared when he saw the Giants that he overturned, he kept on singing The mountain Giant said:

"Love, ride away, we take Frode in your place

Love answered:

"No, he's my son who tells me the Seid .

I will never give you Frode. "

The mountain Giant said:

"Keep on riding Love, we follow you to Himmelstalund.

At the shrine in Himmelstalund Ing sat , Love's husband, in the High Seat

Ings clothing was of the best kind. The horse that pulled the wagons that brought food to his table was of the highest class.

The wagons had all eight bells that rang at each step.

Ing pointed with his hand and the people listened.

Tokk and Hyrrokin point to Ing. Love nods.

The Mountain Giant seized Ing by the neck.

The Giants poured out the mead.

They broke the bronze bronze-lures and beat the drum skin on the holy drums.

Love felt the aloofness wallow over her.

Love sent the death-hit against Ing.

Giants do not feel thirst or hunger.

Giants without Hug seized Ing.

They forced him to stand

They forced him to sit.

They beat Love's husband.

Ing invoked the great seeress,

Pelt on the Lidskjalv. The wooden shelf.

Ing asked:

"I got all the gifts to my people.

I got milk and honey for my tribe.

Be pityful and let me switch ham,

Before the Mare and the Giants take me. "

Völva saw Ing's tears and let him switch ham after he had gone into another world.

Ing fled the Giants this time.

But they would come back.....

Love woke up from her drowsing. She had had a nightmare or was it not a nightmare.

She had seen the mare of the night. Had she seen her coming lover. Her husband to be. Who was Ing.? Where was he? All seemed so frightening. The boat waggled slowly.

Next ...

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## Chapter 20 - ING'S NIGHTMARE

Once again, Love fell into the drowse. Now she dreamt about Ing.

### ING'S NIGHTMARE

Ing bemoaned his fate.  
Ing's tears filled his heart.  
The Mare followed him every night.  
The Giants haunted him all the while  
he wanted to sleep.

Ing shouted,  
"Bring my sister Heid.  
Bring her, she who can read my dreams.  
Heid who knows all about witchcraft and seidr.  
Fetch Heid, she who cuns seid.  
The Giants will destroy me."

Heid said,  
"You have forgotten your roots.  
You have forgotten your closest friends.  
You searched for power and pig tusks  
The giants will take your wealth for themselves.  
They will drink up your mead.  
They will eat up your honey.  
The Mare will engulf your store of berries.  
You will not have any things left  
until you have reached your roots.  
If you do not know from where you come  
You do not know where to go."

Ing fled to a longhouse in Kaupang.  
There, he thought he would be safe among the other powerful men.  
But the Giants found him.

The Mountain Giants surrounded Ing.  
"Stand up Ing, be a man!  
Love's husband, Njård's son, Heid's brother.  
Arise from your nightmare.

Your mead is wasted.  
Your honey is eaten.  
Your pigs have been taken to another owner.  
Your tusks are no longer worth anything.  
Break your high seat.  
Give away your beakers of glass.  
Take off your adorned garments.  
Give away your serk.  
You are to come with us naked."  
The Giants tied his hands,  
The Giants tied his feet.  
Nothing was left of Ing.

Next ...

## Chapter 21 - THE COMEBACK

Love fell asleep again and took on a new “dreamham”.

A moan could be heard from the longhouses.  
"Our queen is crying bitterly over her young husband.  
Love cries bitterly over her husband's doom.  
Love bemoans her own pity. "

Ing was caught in Kaupang.  
He will no longer be in the sea of Njård.  
He will no longer join in on the day of lathering.  
He will no longer call Love's mother his own mother.  
He will no longer do his duty in the longhouses  
With the young women.  
He will no longer compete with the village's young men.  
He will no longer raise Völse.

Love wept over Ing.  
"Gone is my husband, my sweet husband.  
Gone is my love, my sweet Völse.  
Ing has been taken.  
The wild stallion lives no more.  
The teemer, the man-beast lives no more.

I ask the mountains, I ask the dells,  
I ask the woods, I ask the animals:  
Where is my husband?  
I cannot bring him food.  
I cannot bring him drink.

Njård wept over her son.  
Heid wept over her brother.  
There was wailing in the house.  
It was a song in the inner rooms.

When Love saw her sister's sorrow,  
When she saw Heid's sorrow,

She spoke softly to her.  
Love saw her other self in her sister,  
her dark magic self:  
"Your brother's way is no more.  
Ing has been taken by the Giants.  
I would like to bring you to him  
but I do not know where he is. "

Then came an eagle.  
The Holy bird flew above Love's head  
and said:  
"If I tell you where Ing is, what would you give me in return?"

Love answered:  
"If you tell me where Ing is, I will let you visit  
Kvaser's abode. I will let you taste the mead of Quoth.  
You'll stay with Höner, the best bard among the poets. "

The eagle said:  
"Lift your eyes to Diseberg.  
There you will find Heid's brother.  
There you will find the fruitfulness god, Ing.  
There you will find your husband. "

Love and Heid rode to the Diser's beach at Disevi.  
They found Ing in tears.  
Love took Ing's hand in her hers and said:  
"You must be in the underworld half the fruitfulness year.  
Your sister, who is me,  
has asked them to be, in the other  
half of the fruitfulness of the year, in the underworld.  
At Midsummer Eve you shall be called, this day you shall be taken.  
You must clad the trees with fresh leaves.  
Your birthday is Midsummer.  
You should do your duty for the rich beds' 'sake.  
Heid is called at the Fall Eve.  
She should bare the trees of their needles.  
Her feast day is Midwinter's Eve.  
She, who is I,  
shall call the sun again."

Love left Ing in the hands of the fruitfulness year.

The Rosers went back to Woodhenge to say goodbye and to begin the trip back to Dowth and Knowth to stay until Yuletide, Midwinter to see the Yule-birth.

## **Chapter 22 - LOVE LIVES IN DOWTH and KNOWTH AND SAW THE YULE-BIRTH IN NEWGRANGE**

The Rosers walked with the guidance of O'Rian to Dowth to live there in the fall. The Rosers were warmly welcomed back by the Dowth-people that quickly found housing to the Rosers. They were given shelter in the finest long houses not far away from the holy shrine. The Rosers found themselves quickly at home. Roar, Rodulf, Visten, Ingolf went with Rover and the other men in Dowth to hunt. It was already time for harvesting. Harvesting month and the hunt began in a small way. They went on their daily hunting trips. Love, Maren and Karla gathered hay and crops. They helped to hack into the ground and pick up the roots. Love came along well with Dowth-people, especially Rovers family was very friendly to her. The Dowth-women and Love, Maren and Karla picked mushrooms and berries in the early fall-month. The woods and fields staggered of berries, fruit and mushrooms. Sweet fern, woolly burdock, reeds, juniper, rosemary, navel lichen, brown beard lichen, love the herb. Love thought that she understood how to pick love the herb. It tasted good and it reminded her of all good love games she had had in her life. For each orpine she picked she remembered, munned, a man and the meeting with him. The women also gathered sap but otherwise sap-gathering was often done in the spring when the sap was fresh. Above all, they wanted to gather resin for the teeth at the tooth-grinding. Love had already fallen in love with her digging stick. The digging stick, likely mankind's oldest tool, twenty inches long and one inch rough, that Love had sharpened in the coarse end. She used the digging stick without thinking. First she chopped and scraped around the root, then she broke off the root and lifted up the whole root. Love found the plentyness of food was great and many of the women worked quickly and cunningly. The stores must be filled before the winter. The men usually came home empty-handed. During the fall months Rover and Visten together felled two deers, but that was all. Love found most men sat and talked about how they would like to hunt. Long stories about how the traps should be used and who would sit where and for how long and who would go in the drive chain, and what pitfalls to be used. The women scorned to go in the drive-chain. It was the man to do pocketed Dowth-women also said that if there would be any food during the winter, it was of weight that women had time to gather food, and hacking the fields. Love placed over all customs that belonged to the hunt. The men would gather at chosen place at a chosen time. They would have painted themselves with hunting paints. They would bring the right signs to talk and catch the animal hugs. You could not hunt any animal if you had not got leave from the animal hug. The weapons for hunting must undergo cleaning – the bylaw and the bylaw of forgiving. The holy animal has to understand why it was hunted in order not to bring un-hap upon the people. Each game was groomed by a large number of groomings, which were so abundant that Love did not understand much. The men watched hunting as their field.

Love reckoned that it really was not much time left for the hunting. The hunt was, after all, not the most important, but it was the life itself, the hunting feast. It seemed sometimes like they just walked around, carrying their bows and flaunted their hunting outfits. Love the thought of course that some of the hunting dress allured her, on the other hand, perhaps the most depended on the man with the suit. She giggled to herself. She thought she un-dressed the men at the hunting feast and carried on to giggle. She liked naked good-looking men. She found the men and their hunting paintings and around the carrying around of arms became a way to mark their tribal area, much like the capercaillie cocks. She liked the kenning.

Love reckoned that women in Dowth brought home three-quarters of the food to the tribe. The remaining quarter were brought home by the men. That was why there were more goddesses than gods among the Vanirs.

The Rosers and Love thrived in Dowth. They rested when they had gathered the food. It was so easy to gather. They took part in the meetings the evenings when you met and told stories and events for each other. The Dowth –people liked Roar’s stories and jokes and Roar quickly became liked by all and was invited to many longhouses to tell sagas. The time flew and it became Fall, Harvest month. In Fall month the Dowth-people and the Rosers walked to Knowth to awe the Fall Eve, that is, when half the time remains for Yuletide. The Shrine at Knowth was built to awe Spring Eve and Fall Eve.

Love sighed of happiness to behold Knowth. The shrine at Knowth resembled the Shrine at Newgrange, Knowth, but Knowth was bigger. This known shrine, of which she had heard so much. Now she stood in front of the opening and the Gydjas and the Gothis groomed the Fullway walk. Far away, Love heard the feast-tow coming in the. She let her eyes search around the manifold of holy stones. Her gaze fell on the fifth stone that showed the holy wedding between the Sun and the Moon.

In the middle there was the sun tokened as a spiral. On either side a waxing Moon, of which the right was linked to the sun as a sign of bond between the Sun and the Moon.

- Wherever the Moon is we can read it with the help of our shrine, Goldy, the Vistens Vigydja from Knowth told.

Visten had found his beautiful midsummer love again and smiled with his whole ansyn. He pulled her back and said proudly to the other Rosers that this was Goldy from Knowth.

Goldy had raven black hair with golden highlights in her hair, at least it seemed so. Love found the blend sparkled.

Goldy kept on to talk about Knowth. She took Visten in her hand and made sure they could see the holy Moonstone. Love reckoned to the fifty-second stone. On the stone seven, rounds were carved, a snake, twenty-one half-moons, two half-moons during the seven roundels, and in the middle a big spiral.

-During the three days of hiking Moon is hidden, it is born again.

You see that three of half-moons hidden by the Goddess spiral. These three half-moons were linked to day twenty-eight, null and one, seen from right to left. The moon is born day twenty-nine thus beginning as null. The remaining carvings show the Moon in its manifold shapes. That is, you follow the stone all around, from right to left, up, left to right and then down to get back to the spiral. Full rings, the top, night eleven to seventeen sign the nights when the moon shines the brightest. During the full moon, night fourteen, you see two half-moons stressing the half, that shows when the moon is in the making and in the waning, Goldy proudly told of the Rosers. She carried on.

Sixty-two-times the moon show up at five sun-years, which will be a full moon-turn. Then the sun and the moon are together again. They are wed, she said and smiled.

In the background Love heard the Feast tow, the Fullway walk going up and around the shrine. Now Love saw the Knowth –people walk in the Fullway walk in the stillness of the night they slid forward, wearing ankle-length robes. They held torches in their hands and sang whisper quiet, as well as if they did not want to awake the shrine.

Goldy told the others to join hands and look up at the Moon and sky. Love looked up at a starry clear sky that glittered to awe the night. Love felt like they went straight up to the sky, as if they were lifted from the ground and flew like a bird, but straight up. Love knew that her mother and all the other Rosers at home also awed the Fall Eve and took part of the same sky. Love felt as if the stars sent the message from her to her mother. All the Vanirs shared the same feeling, right now, wherever they were on earth. The sky was the screen, Love thought.

Love felt being one with the whole world, the fully fullness, the wholeness at its best.

Love was broken off in her thoughts by a mouth-harp-sounding din that slowly neared the shrine. Magically, the sound of Megi, that allured the listeners who fell into the song and they began a slow waddling gait. The dins called for thinking and Love let her thoughts fly free.

After the feast, they stayed some weeks with Goldy at Knowth and helped with the daily chores before they returned to Dowth.

The Fall Month became Winter Month that became Yule-month. The Rosers thrived in Dowth and the weather did not make any mischiefs. Yule neared, the fest of the light and Birth. Many groomings were made.

A lot of work had filled the stores. They had luckily dried fish and meat. Berries, mushrooms and plants had been dried and stored. They could now return to the bylaws and doings.

One of the most weighty sidrs that everyone was talking about, was who had borne fruit. Who wore the sun-baby? Love stroked her belly, which was still quite flat. She knew that the sun had not teemed her. The moon Goddess Disa had given her the moon-blood each Month. The sun-baby would be the next leading Hof-gydja or Hof-gothi. The 81 Twains from the Teeming in Dowth were there. Some Twains had already given birth and brought their newborns home. Some were not teemed at all, some were ladies in waiting.

Love felt on Tarja and Sirpas maws, but they just laughed and shook their heads. Rover said that Love should keep calm until they came back to Newgrange. There, she would be aware of who wore the sun-child. Karla and the other settra-girls in Dowth worked to knead oils and make gifts for the big Yuletide feast. Ingolf and Visten were behested to gather mistletoe. Roar told wonderful tales of a tree that was green all the year round, and then he did not mean the juniper whose berries tasted good in brewed ale. The Dowth-people polished bronze and gold, cleaned the tinkling bells, they chose the dried fruits that would be eaten during the Yuletide holy-days.

A few days before the Midwinter eve, the Dowth-people and the Rosers went to Newgrange to awe the great feast of wheels, that was Yule. Again, had large numbers of Vanirs had gathered to awe the Yuletide of Newgrange.

Love knew many people from Midsummer and Love greeted all, right and left. The Rosers and Dowth-people camped some hundred feet from the Newgrange shrine. Love and Karla went around to find friends and to hear with the Vigydjas what Love would do.

They bumped into Elspeth who became wild of happiness to see Love and Karla again. Elspeth said she had a pleasant fall with a bit of harvesting, hunting and of course new body carvings.

-Where?, Love asked wonderingly.

-Do you have a piece that you have not carved? Where would it be? Love asked .



- Here ! Elspeth smiled and lifted her hair so that her neck was shown. Two fine spirals and three half-moons were carved into her neck up to the hairline.

Love and Karla gave a delighted cry.

- Awesome, fullsome, winsome, Karla said, but now you cannot have any free space left to carve, Karla carried on.

-You have not seen everything. I have more new carvings, Elspeth answered and giggled. She smiled and turned around and pulled up slowly her hip drape and spread her legs. Love and Karla could just view a jumble of signs carved on her buttocks before Elspeth let the hip drape fall again and said that they must go to their place for the groomings.

- You will see more in the night, Elspeth said and winked with her right eye to both Karla and Love.

Elspeth took Love by the hand and led her to the Hofgothi Daragh who told that Love without the settra-girl should come to Yuletide in the morning, the Sun God Ull is together with the Earth Goddess Njård, inside the Newgranges shrine. She was chosen to stand in the holy tunnel to watch the birth of the sun-child the 21 st of Yulemonth. The bay was chosen by the sun and the earth and the stars.

So it was deemed, and Love came back to the Rosers that were beginning to get ready to take part when the solar disk was shown. The same red-ocher smeared horse drew the disc of the sun at midsummer was now again ready to show the dark side, as a sign of sun's waning.

The Sun God Ull would withdraw for the night. Many had already lit torches and stood around the We . Stillness. No sound broke the smyltness.

The Hofgydja Brid had now boarded the ingong stone and let her right Sun-hand fall, then the wagon with sun disk began to move and the black side of the solar disk was shown to the gathered throng. Stillness.

When the sun disk was halfway on its journey around the holy “We”-place all lifted their torches like a greeting to the sun to come back.

The only sound that could be heard, was the rattles of the horse's reins.

The Hofgydja Brid told that the Yuletide meal awaited, the time measurement and the choice of the Kona-ung and hopefully the birth of the next leader-Gydja or Gothi was to happen tomorrow morning at Midwinter Solstice with a full Sun and Moon kissing. The Sun would be fully black for a while.

The Rosers gathered and went in the torchlight to the long houses that were near the shrine. It was very crowded inside the long houses.

Horns were filled with frothy ale given to all around who wanted.

All had added something in one big pile that was handed out by the Vigydjas so that there was enough for everyone. Porridge, groats, of any kind were found in clay vessels that were offered and the whole pig tasted good as it always used to do. Love the good and chatted with Rover and Elspeth. Love could not say no the allure of her body carvings. Ingolf and Roar stood up and shouted Yule songs.

Wheel songs about the wheel, and about the birth, about the time to come, that is the solar disk of gold, the Ull on Njård, their Holy meeting, the teeming.

The Hofgydjas sat in their own place. The glow from the fireplace spread in the great nave for the big feast.

The night came and the darkness grew more and more. Love and O'Rian went out a while after the awed meal and hugged in the first chamber. Love pulled Rover under the mistletoe that hung at the way in, the ingong, to the nave. O'Rian tried to say no, but Love was stubborn. She took a firm grip on Rover's neck and bent him back and kissed him. Then they went out into the night. They gazed up at the stars and Love thought of her mother and father and her family back home. She felt an even stronger homesickness. They kept on to hugging and looked now and then someone with a torch to come or go. Love thought the darkness was cozy at the wheel. Without darkness, there would be such a fine light festival that Yule. She loved the glow of long houses, the torches, the fireplaces, the Bronze ovens. Everything belonged to the Yule, likewise it was with the Fullway walk and the food and the time measurement, the score, like the Angles and Saxons called it.

The Fullway walk kept life alive. The Fullway walk gave good harvest and many children and spoke to the Goddesses. The awe of Ull gave new strength to light and he teemed with Mother Earth.

After having rubbed their noses against each other, they went back into the nave and continued the feast. Roar had come in great form. He stood on one leg on the stamped earth-floor and sang a Wheel Song as he swung the horn with foaming ale. Maren, Elspeth and Karla had found was her husband and crowded under the mistletoe. The three twains buffed and pushed to get right under the mistletoe, which ended with, that all six ended up in a heap on the floor while they kissed and wrestled.

People laughed and brawled. Ingolf had drunk a little too much ale and spewed into Roars cow horn without Roar saw it until it was too late. Funny Yuletide, Love thought, or Cool Yule, as they say here. Love and Rover lay down in the loft in the longhouse. Everybody slept in a big pile. Crowded but cozy, Love thought and drew Rover closer to herself and fell asleep.

Love was awakened by Karla that woke her. The dawn had begun and it was time to go to the holy shrine. Love still had not found out who would be crowned. She asked Karla if she knew something.

Karla replied smilingly that Love would soon see.

You will see all the twains-in waiting, Karla said.

Who will give birth today? Love asked sleepy

I don 't know. Only one of the 30 twains that are waiting a child gave birth yesterday so 29 are left. We will see who the lucky Twain will be.

Karla shook life in the other Rosers that slowly woke up. Love and Karla went up to the shrine after Karla hastily clad Love in her Vigydja-dress and gave Love the rings and gifts and smeared her with good smelling oil, which made Loves body carvings shine even more.

Look Karla all the 81 Twains are waiting outside the shrine, Love said

Yes and some of the women are already in labor and the midwives are helping them to pin the time of birth, Karla said

Look, there is Mildgyth and Aedelstan, she is also in waiting . Cool ! It might be her. Rover knows them well, Love said to Karla.

The Hofgothi Daragh stood at the ingong, the entrance, and told Love to hurry up for now it was a rush. He lifted her over the Holy Input stone. Karla stayed outside. The ingong had been clad with a black cloth and it was pitch-black darkness. She felt someone grabbed her hand and led her through the sixty-two foot long channel or gong. Love felt that the gong could not be more than three to four feet wide. When she looked up at the ceiling, she could barely glimpse the overlapping stones that crafted a vault. She passed the Gydjas and Gothis who were lined up inside the shrine. She came into a vault that measured twenty-one feet in height.

She glimpsed the Hofgydja Brid, the Hofgothi Gaut, the Hofgydja Sunneve. Stillness ruled during the awed time when the Sun God Ulls life-giving rays would enter and awe the Earth Goddess Njårds child. Love saw that the Vigothis had removed the holy stone that was above the ingong, known as the Sun Stone. Through the hole that was created when they took away the Sun Stone, which measured about three feet long and one foot height, the Sun Gods brilliant Sun-beams reach into the Holy of Holies.

The Stillness-in-waiting. Love could not see much. Something was moving on the rocks next to her, but she could not see what it was.

The waiting longed. It was still early in the morning. Love became boggled, but then calmed down and remembered her mother's words, that the waiting in itself is the goal. They waited in stillness, in the dark. The other Gydjas and Gothis gave strength and gave Love a shyless feeling of togetherness. Love felt that she belonged to everyone and everything that was around was a whole. Love got more and more used to the dark. Outside she could hear the moans from the ladies -in-waiting. The Vigydjas kept whispering to the Midwives if the ladies-in-waiting could hold on any more of if the baby was coming. The Vigydjas wanted timing. The Vigothis and the vigydjas had kept track of the stars and the Moon and the Sun all year around to pinpoint this event. The Stars, the Moon and the Sun were all in the right place. This Midwinter Solstice there would be a full darkening of the sun. This was the holy token that this baby was the chosen one for this clan.

The first sun-beams glittered above the land line. The Sun God Ull rose to awe the land whose land-line the Sun God rays had just come over. A little while later, the light hit the open box on top of the ingong-stone and the light came into the Newgrange shrine. Love had never felt a whiter light. It felt as if she had fallen into a flour sack. The first thin ray of sun god Ull Sun-seed strung the light hatch and slid along the walls of the gong. Love felt like it was the first time she had seen the day-light, like now, like the first day she open her eyes, that is the day she was born. The sunbeams gave the light to the newborn child.

Love saw the carved walls. She reckoned to twenty-two large boulders, of which fifteen were carved with circles and spirals.

The beam of light reached all the way to the innermost of the Newgrange, tunnel, the gong, the holy stone Stallar laid to the right of Love. Around the stone were nine yellow-clad Vigydjas and Midwives with white and red clothes. Now Love saw who were on Stone Stallar in the end of the Newgrange gong. Two women, one was her friend the Vigydja Summerset and the other was Mildgyth. Her friend Aveta would guide the sun's child together with the Midwife. The Midwife had stired warm water in the two feet wide stone bowl in the chamber to the left in the inner of Newgrange. Love was just dazed.

The inner of Newgrange was made of three chambers of each had a large round carved bowl of stone with grounded dots for the knees about a foot high and two feet wide. The inner gong was magic. Love understood that she was in the womb of the mother goddess. The earth would give offspring. The child that was teemed during Spring eve at spring. The inner roof was so high. Love felt that it was a lot of

space here in the womb. She felt like the bay inside Mildgyth. She became all of the babies being born in Newgrange and made at Knowth.

Love saw how the Sun God Ulls rays shone a seven-inch wide strip of on Mildgyth's teemed maw. Mildgyth moaned. Both Summerset and the Midwife held their hands on Mildgyth maw. Mildgyth was open a handwidth. Mildgyth was standing on her knees on the stone-Stallar with her hands on the wall. Love could see the head of the child coming out. Mildgyth screamed. The drummers drummed, the bronzelures brawled. Ulls light band of Sun-seed swung slowly across the inner chamber. The Midwife turned Mildgyth around and laid her on the back. The Midwife put her arms on the maw of Mildgyth and pushed. Right in time when the Sun-beams enlightened the Mornir of Mildgyth, her holy womb, and the baby was born. Summerset kneaded the breast of Mildgyth and the holy milk began to flow. Summerset gathered the first drops in a clay vessel. The holy milk. The Midwife took the newborn baby and put the baby to the left breast of Mildgyth and the baby began to eat. Love saw a great smile of happiness on Mildgyth's lips. Love saw that Summerset and the Midwife were happy too. Good harvest would be good. The stars would be happy.

The Hofgydjan Brid came and stood in front of Summerset and Mildgyth. The Hofgydja slowly brought the Holy bronze-axe so that it meekly touched Mildgyth's and Summerset's maws and shone in the Sunbeams. Summerset sat herself behind Mildgyth and held her arms around her.

Highly awed Vigydja Summerset. You wore the sun child in Your Womb last year. This year you will guide Mildgyth, the Hofgydja Brid said and looked at Mildgyth who was happy but tired.

Ulls rays have teemed you both at Spring Eve to have offspring at Yule, and now at Midwinter we have offspring. Mildgyth, You are now the Kona-ung. You carry the signs of the sun. You two will teem the fields with the Holiness. You will give the Holy Milk to be coated on the wooden ards that will plow the furrows of the land. You and your children will travel many miles to awe all the fields. You will make a good harvest and no-war. Ars og frithur, Yield and frith. You will craft fruitfull women. You will let the Sun God Ull's power awe the fruitfull wombs of women and they will bring many children into the world through your awe and Fullway walk along with the stars. Mildgyth, your child will learn the bylaws, doings and timing and become an awed Gydja or Gothi. Your child will be the leader of our clan, our kinsmen, the Hofgydja Breed told all.

You embody the Earth Goddess Njard and Anu. You two will carry her and the Sun God Ull's and Bel's children together. You will carry their will and their fruitfulness and You two will ensure that everything grows. The twains have teemed in time! The Hofgothi Daragh said with a dark reethe, voice.

The Hofgydja Brid turned and caught the Ull's Bel's rays with her outstretched hands so that sunlight streamed through her fingers. Then she turned around and put her hands on Summer Set's and Mildgyth's maws and whispered something that Love could not hear.

Summerset and Mildgyth nodded. Then the full High Readan gathered and whispered something to each other while the tinkling of little bells, the so-called the Readan -ringing. When the bells rang out all the high Gydjas and Gothis took their places along the wall inside the Newgrange gong.

Then the Moon made love to the Sun. The Sun waned and the day became night. After a little while the Sun and Moon had kissed and teemed and the light came back. The Sun waxed again. The Gydjas and the Gothis know all this since long time ago, due to the talks with Egypt, Sumer and other High cultures. The Gothis put back the stone at the ingong, the entrance, and it all became pitch dark again.

The baby should go to sleep and be in frith.

The Hofgydjan Brid went walking around Stallar and endorsed Summerset and the other Gydjas and Gothis arrived one by one.

First came Hofgydjan Loweswater and laid their hands on Summer set's breasts, who had left the holy gong then the Hofgoden Daragh did same thing.

When Loweswater passed Love, Loweswater stack Love a thing which she had in her Right sun-hand when she gathered Ull's and Bel's strength.

Loweswater pressed the thing in the hand of Love. Love did not understand but she could guess. The thing felt like a gold chain.

The Gold chain had gotten holy power by Loweswater who had let the Sun beams enlighten the golden chain. Loweswater had taken Love's fate in her hands. Only those who wore a Sun-chain lit and blessed by the sun-beams could undertake what was the vanir's highest rank. Love could hardly believe what had happened. But could really Loweswater do this? Clearly, and the choices are many before the main Hofgydja selected. But now, anyway Loweswater had ensured that Love was one of the few and could be chosen. The Hofgydja Brid was probably not very happy with Loweswater's behavior but Loweswater had her right to choose the one that she wanted .

Love felt the how the Hofgothi Daragh took her hand and the chain and fastened it around Love's neck.

Love smiled at the Hofgoden Daragh who smiled back.

The Hofgydja Sunneve, Hofgothi Daragh passed Summerset and laid likewise their hands on Summerset's maw.

The song took and now the sunlight waned in strength. The Hofgydjan Brid put a huge necklace around the Summerset's neck. The necklace shimmered almost as much as the Brisingamen that the Hofgydja Brid wore. The Hofgydja Brid put a robe around the Summer Set's shoulders and one of the settra-girls put a three times wrought bangle around the Summerset's right calf. The song echoed back and forth. Mildgyth would get the same treatment next year. Now she should be with her child. Next year she would go with Summerset and awe the fields. After three years Mildgyth would take over her role and rank and guide the next yuletide-birther.

The sun disk with the golden side had been brought around the shrine to show that the sun had come back all according to the old bylaw. The sun-songs were heard strongly since the early morning. The Gydjas and Gothis greeted the sun, the solar disk. Then they lined up in front of the outgoing to wait for Summerset. The Midwives took care of Kona-ung Mildgyth and her baby the Ung, young .

Maeve and the settra-girls lifted Summerset carefully as if she was their most dearest hack-ax, and there she was, the kona-ung of last year that would teem all the fields. Their lives, the outcome from the small fields, from fishing, the berry-picking, all hung now on her.

They lifted her slowly and stood her up. They lathered and smeared her so that she smelled good. They stroked her stomach and listened with his ear to his stomach and tried to hear audio from the upcoming baby. They kissed her and wished her good luck. Some of the settra-girls would follow every step she and Mildgyth took over the next three years.

The settra-girls put Summerset s in a small stretcher-stool and carried her through to the waiting folks. They carried out Summerset and put her on the Stallar stone near the shrine, near the viewers that helped carry her around .

The Hofgydjan Brid took a braided ring of Mistletoe and put this awesomely at the Summerset's head. Summerset also got a Holy Ring, galders and the Holy measurements to bring along on her and Mildgyth journey around the fields to spread fruitfulness to all tribes. Summerset also got a Holy bag with healing herbs, chosen seeds, dried mushrooms with men-seed, women squirt and sap to spread the fields. The Hofgydjas and the Hofgothis stood in a ring around Summerset and grasped each other's hands. They lifted their hands while they sang a crowning song.

Love glimpsed to Elspeth who winked as an answer. Love had just come out of the aisle and saw the bright light after the pitch-black darkness. Love waved to Elspeth in reply and was again enthralled by Elspeth's carved body. The Hofgothi Daragh pulled Love lightly in her gown for her to stand in line with the other Vigydjas. The settra-girls stood farther out to the right.

Hofgydjan Brid signed to the drummers and to the flute-blowers to begin playing.

Thereafter, Summerset was carried nine times around the Newgrange Shrine. After nine laps were on a sedan chair with Holy signs carved wagon. The wagon had four wheels with many spokes, even those carved with holy tokens.

The driver, she took the reins, smacked and then they carried off from the Fullway walk. The Vanirs waved goodbye to their newly crowned Konaung. Each tribe had hoped to become the tribe that first got the visit. But first she and Mildgyth would meet. The Gothis and the Gydjas had measured and saturated time using poles that are Rods and cut notches in both wood and stone in order to save the passage of time that the Sun stages. Some used long ropes, others measured with viewing tools in wood. For each measurement would be as good as possible it was required the highest possible truth. Faithfull drawings had been made on the Sun's headway and its kinship to the next night's stars. Maps were drawn in flattened earth to help the memory, the Munin, to be able to put the Rods and poles right.

Love noted that the large sun wheel or disk was strung in ropes with help of wood make-ups. The sun wheel was smaller than the sun gear she had seen in Rosers and Gutters lands. Sometimes the Rosers went to make a big goat of straw and then burn him and the grass in spring to give place for new goats, new grass. The fathom measured eight feet. The sun-wheel was braided by the finest straw the fields had given during the year. The Hofgydja Brid nodded and the gathered folks sat down. The Hofgydja took a torch in her right hand and walked towards the sun. The kinsmen began slowly to murmur. It belonged to the sidr. The hum eked for each step the Hofgydja came closer to the sun gear. When she came a twenty feet from the sun-disk of straw four Vigydjas sank the straw- sun by four ropes that were fastened in four tacks. The ropes leading up to two wooden stands twenty-one feet high. Sun was now in a kind of swing that was lowered so that the Hofgydja could lite it. The Hofgydja went straight ahead and lifted the torch to the sun gear. The buzz from the kinswomen and kinsmen eked even more. Brid brought the torch to the straw-sun which quickly caught fire. Meanwhile Vigydjas snatched to the ropes so that the sun gear went up in the air. It was important to be on time so that the straw-sun was as high in the air as possible. When the sun reached its highest peak it banged.

Love was amazed. She had never seen something like that before.

How did they get the sun to pop in the air or was it the Goddesses who wanted to hurt the Vanirs , a bad omen. But the Gothis and the Gydjas looked happy.

Love did not have to think very long before she saw the sun disk of gold on the Holy wagon was brought to the place where the sun gear had been.

Of course she would have thought of that it was a sign of the sun's rebirth. The foreverness of the Sun. The Goddesses were not at all evil against the Vanir folks. It was the other way around,, the goddesses seemed to be pleased with the Vanir folks in this heavenly show.

Then followed a series of long and worked out bylaws and doing rituals to awe the rebirthed sun and its link with the Holy Goddess Njård and Anu. The Gydjas and Gothis went back and forth, to and fro and measured the lengths and heights to the stars, the moon , with rods with holes and stones with holes and other tools and sometimes they showed their awe to the Earth and the Sun.

The day passed, O'Rian and Elspeth brought back the Rosers to the long house in Dowth where they were to rest. Roar, Rodulf and Love talked with the Dowth-folks whether they would wait or travel later. So far, the weather was mild and there was no sign of change, but bad weather could come quickly.

Next ...

## Chapter 23 - LOVE VISITS THE ORKNEY ISLES

Love deemed that they would fare. At worst, they would have to winter somewhere on the way until the weather got better. Love, Rodulf and Roar mooted with the other Rosers, who also felt that it was better to use the good weather before it got worse. That said and done, after having taken leave of O'Rian, Elspeth and the Vigothis and Vigydjas, the Rosers boarded Noatun and set off towards the other coast to reach the Orkney Islands.

They were lucky. The wind came straight from the stern and they had good speed. They went straight for the Rhinns of Galloway, past Moors and then further up towards Ayr.

From the sea they could glimpse Maybole's large Maypole.

The wind died down and they had to take up the oars. With steady strokes, they slipped past Rothesay, the Rodes' island. They went up into the Fynebay and into Tarbertsound. They went ashore on the Knapdale side of the narrow strait to eat and to find their headway. When the Rosers put their feet up to take their midday meal near a magic oak and in a juniper bush, they bumped into a loving twain. The twain saw that the Rosers came but did not care about them and kept on making love to each other. The Rosers had no hurry. They ate and watched. Ingolf and Visten had fallen asleep when the twain stopped. Love invited them to share the Rosers' meal.

They ate together and talked about the Rosers' trip. The love-twain liked the food and gave the Rosers readans about how they should fare to get to Orkney. The twain, who could barely stop kissing, advised them to sail through the straits at Loch Linnhe and Loch Ness. It would be by far the fastest way but they also warned of the giant who was said to live in the straits and could bring the boats down into the depths.

The story of the giant gloomed the mood in the camp but they deemed to sail through the straits anyway. The Rosers took leave of the loving twain and went up the Jura's Brosound and past the islands of Luing and the Seil to enter the Lorn bay, which led to Loch Linnhe and Loch Ness. The Rosers rowed into the strait with great worthiness and awe.

To be on the safe side, Love stood in the bow and Karla in the stern, both with bare breasts. Ingolf hung over the railing to get a glimpse of the giant in the deep water. He hung and glared by turns over the port and over the starboard rails. Finally, Rodulf leaned over him, without him seeing and called, "Boo!". Ingolf stood up like an arrow and stared around him. The others could not hide a giggle. They rowed. Nothing happened. They came out into the Moray bay and carried on northwards, past the Black Isle. They rested, camping a few days.

They had rowed for a long time and were on their way back to Roden, though a lot of travelling was still to be done.

They needed the rest. With new strength, they sat down at the oars and rowed past many rivers: Strath, Brora, Kildonan, Lang Well, Berridale. They stayed in Berridale for a few days, where they met a very friendly family who offered them the tastiest jams and berry dishes that Ingolf had eaten in all his life, at least so he said. They came to Wick, one of the finest natural bays in all of Caithness. They did not go ashore but waved to the boats as they passed. They continued northward and entered Freswick, another very fine natural bay that gave shelter and shield from ocean storms. The weather remained warm and mild. Rodulf and Roar chuckled, delighted that the goddesses were happy and wished that



the Rosers would live for the rest of the trip. Rodulf said that because they had taken part in so many holy bylaws and doings, the goddesses could not be angry with the Rosers. They rounded the Caithness cape and had their first sighting of the Orkney Isles, South Ronaldsay. They came to a small village named after the God Bure, Burwick. They rowed into Scapa Flow and came to Hoy Sound, which was next to the island of Hoy, the high island. They squinted at the high cliff. Karla, Visten and Maren were involved in a war of words about how high the hill could be. Karla felt that the rock measured five thousand feet, Visten thought four thousand, while Maren claimed six thousand.

Karla ended the wordings, saying that in any case there was a “We” at the top. Karla said that not only Gydjas or Gothis had the right to awe the site, the We; anyone could go there and make love in the goddesses’ honour. Love looked at Maren and understood what she was thinking. Love saw that Maren’s eyes shone with Holy lust and that if she had a man, Maren would make love at the Holy We.

They soon had other things to think about. They quickly neared the small town Stromness. Love saw the red sandstone shining at her. She thought the scenery was beautiful, goddess-like. They landed in Stromness after many troubles with the stream, which pushed Noatun back and forth. Rodulf did not think he had much steering strength. The stream did what it wanted. Only after a lot of twisting with the rudder did they come to the shore.

They were welcomed by a strong woman in her sixties. Her white hair had known many hardships and a long life. Love had heard of her. Uncle Hauskuld, her father and the Hofgothi Olof had told her about the beautiful and proud woman of Orkney. Love had supposed that she and Olof had lived together for a while and had been very happy together but that they came to split for a reason that Love had never found out.

The woman was called Vif, Love munned. Vif was not Vigydja-awed but she carried much knowledge and led the people of Orkney. The Hofgothi Olof had told Love when Love was small that Vif was the woman who knew the most about healing herbs in all the Vanir tribes. Vif had visited and lived with the shamans and Nájds, or Noiadis, in the Finnae land in the North and Siberia. From them, she had learned many secrets and many thought her to be knowledgeable of the Galders.

When Love came to the village, the large woman hugged her.

“We greatly like that you have come here. Two of my fellow tribesmen were at the Midsummer Fullway walk in Newgrange and they told us that you were there. I was hoping that you would be passing by and that we would have time to talk,” said Vif and hugged Love even harder. She kept on talking without waiting for an answer.

“Now let us go to my house of stone before we head to Skara Brae. The Goddess Eir has spoken to me and told me to give you healing knowledge. But first I will send a boat to heat the houses of Skara Brae. They are not used at this time of year, but now that Love has come here, we will show you our holy place. Then we’ll go to the Ring of Brodgar and I will awe you and your settra-girl with the holy ring’s Holy bylaws, even though the moon is not right,” said Vif. She turned around and walked up towards the houses in Stromness. Her grey-red robe was very tight. The seams were sewn with care or else they would not have taken the strain. Rounds and Sun Signs had been sewn with walrus and pig tusks. The walrus tusks and wildboar tusks were carefully sewn into fine rings. Love saw that Vif’s cloth was worth a fortune and was highly esteemed. On the other hand, only Vif could wear it because everyone knew her.

The Rosers went into a stone house and were invited to sit down. They were given a bitter drink to drink. It tasted good after the trip. Inside the houses Love could only see some parts of the building's inside. She saw, or rather felt, a pair of Stromness people walking by her, going to the boats to go to Skara Brae.

Love smelled the smell of burnt peat and bird droppings.

Vif laughed and said, "Here, we must cherish our few trees. Any droppings and anything else that can be used to make fire, we use to heat the houses. Trees may be felled only if the Readan has given the go-ahead, hence the smell. But you get used to it."

They talked for a long time and Vif wanted to know all about Love's family, and of course the Hofgothi Olof. Love said that Olof was now so weak that he was unable to travel far. Sometimes he had to be carried to other longhouses. Love said she thought he would soon be forever at one with the Goddess Njård. Love said that her mother also lay in a sick-bed.

"Love, mun one thing. Age is a state of mind. We live forever with our goddesses. I can still feel Olof's breath on me, feel him inside me. I mun how I engulfed him and how I felt the day after he was in my body. I am proud and happy to have carried his Hug. These memories I carry with me wherever I go."

"Vif, he asked me to send a small gift to you," answered Love and turned to Karla, who had taken out a small bronze figure.

Karla put the little figure in Love's hand.

Love slowly opened her hand and held out the finely cast figure to Vif.

"This bronze statue is the God Frey, or the fruitfulness god Ing. Olof could not tell. Ing is much older but the god Frey's love for his sister, his other half, the fruitfulness Goddess Freya, was to his liking. The Hofgothi Olof still loves you, even though he is far away and many grooves have been carved have been made since you two split."

With awe, Vif took the small bronze-stood, barely three inches high, in her hand. The fruitfulness god sat cross-legged and with one hand holding his chin, as if he was thinking of someone beloved. The other hand held his wonderful hard-on. Vif took the little bronze carving and kissed it.

"Love, you have made me deeply happy. I hope you have time to see Olof before he faces the Goddess Njård and then enters Valhall. Tell him that my feelings have not cooled. I still love him.

Karla answered, "He harbours the same feelings for you. When he gave me bronze carving he said that he gathered his last strength to empty his seed over this figure of Frey or Ing for you."

Vif closed her eyes. She smiled and held the small bronze carving tightly, so tightly that her knuckles whitened. The three women sat in silence for a long time. Love saw how tears fell over Vif's cheeks. Vif took Love's hand. They smiled at each other.

Vif went out of the house and gave orders to launch the boats. The Rosers climbed on board Noatun. It was only Love who boarded Vif's ship.

They set out over the Hoy sound to get to Skara Brae.

Soon the wind gave them good speed. Vif said that the Orkney people used to live all year in Skara Brae. The headland that used to stick out and give shelter from wind and storms had been worn away

and then there was no shield against the sea. Therefore it was decided to move to other places. Nowadays the Orkney-people used the stone houses at Skara Brae as Settra-houses to ready the Orkney people for the Fullway walks at the Ring of Brodgar and the Standing Stones of Stenness.

They went up to Skara Brae, which was embedded in yellowed vegetation. Love could barely see what were the Settra-houses and what was the hill. She soon saw what was what when she saw the smoke curling up from the chimney. Four men and four women had gone to Skara Brae and warmed up the houses. The arrival of the guests from afar gave reason to light more of the scarce wood that had drifted ashore. When Love came into the first stone house with a stone-framed wooden door, she saw the cold brick walls were at least three feet thick and its roof of overlapping stones measured eight or nine feet.

All seven stone houses had been built in much the same way. A large fireplace was in the middle of the room, built of flat slabs stood on their edges. The Orkney people had also built beds fixed in the walls. On the beds was dry grass and heather, which was then covered with sheepskins.

“It looks very cosy,” said Love.

“It sure does,” nodded Ingolf, who wanted to sleep.

Love understood that Ingolf was tired and would no doubt fall asleep at any time. She stared straight at him and he understood what she meant and straightened up. Above each bed was a shelf built into the wall. The shelf was at the right length from the sleeper to put their jewellery, bits of flint, horns or other things on there. Straight ahead in the fifteen by twenty feet rooms were stone shelves. About five feet wide and four feet high and fitted into the walls, they stored a myriad of things. What first lured Love’s eyes was a jaw-bone of a whale. There were also awls and stone clubs of all shapes and sizes and a range of bright beads of finely worked stone. In the corners of the rooms were boxes of stone slabs with fine clay-joints, used to store soggy shells and bait for fishing.

In every room, there were small stone cellars used as lockers for finely carved bones. Love and the Rosers were shown around the aisles that led around to the nine houses. One therefore never had to go outside into the wind or a storm to visit any of their neighbours.

There were even drains that brought shit and water out through stone channels to the outside of the houses. Two small rooms were built to house their restrooms.

Vif told the Rosers to sit around the fire in the middle and tuck in to the awesome Blackfish or Orca blubber, crab, oysters and mussels. Leaf-baked cod was being grilled over the fire.

“This is winsome and mouthwatering food,” Love said

“Roar, where’s Maren?” asked Love.

“Maren has been missing since Stromness,” answered Roar.

Love knew what Maren was up to but she could not do anything about it. In any case, she would have done the same thing herself. She wondered whether Maren had gone to the hill at Hoy.

When everyone had eaten, Vif sat down with Love. Vif wanted to know more about Newgrange, Stonehenge, Ale Stones and Love's home. Love happily told her about the fare and Vif shone and smiled.

When Love ended her tale, Vif said:

“Love, there is one thing I have never understood. What happened to your father?”

“My father Alf was killed in battle with the believers of the Mercurius gods. A number of warriors from Urnenfelder had built a wooden shelter in Skade’s southernmost land. My father and a number of Gydjas went there to read galders to the Mercurius followers, using the power of the galders to make them go back to the south. When they met, edged irons were thrown into the flock and they hit my father.

“It was the first battle between the Vanirs and the Aesirs. It made the Gydjas so angry that the wooden shelter of the Aesirs was broken down. They walked across the field with galders,” answered Love with sorrow and sadness.

Vif took Love in her arms and hugged her dearly.

“Love, now let's get ready for the Fullway walk, my way,” Vif said. “No signs or tokens of the Goddesses have been given yet but I will go out in the dark and look for a sign. If the sign becometh awed, we’ll set off in the morning to the Ring of Brodgar and Stenness and do the Fullway Walk,” said Vif and took out a pitcher of strong sperm whale-ale.

“Drink this and make sure that everyone gets a taste,” said Vif and called to a young man, who bowed.

“Love, this young man is looking forward to meeting you. He is my youngest son, Yulner,” said Vif. She then turned to Yulner and said:

“Yulner, you should take good care of Love during the time I am meeting the goddesses to ask for a sign. You must fulfill all her wishes. If I’m told that you have not listened to her wishes then we will have to talk later.

“Love, I really hope my son is to your taste,” said Vif, almost boonfully.

Love looked up at the young man. He was broad-shouldered and clean-shaven with long, curly blonde hair, fine ansyn lines and narrow hips - and, most weightily, he had beautiful knees.

Love looked up at Vif, smiled and nodded.

“Good,” said Vif and stood up and looked warningly at her son, who smiled back.

“Give me a little more whale-ale and knead my shoulders,” Love said, stretching out on one of the sheepskin beds.

Yulner gave her more ale and slowly began to stroke her shoulders and back. Love found that Yulner had hands of gold. Karla, Visten, Rodulf and Roar also squeezed into the bed and it was getting crowded. In the other bed, the Stromness people had already become lively after drinking the whale-ale.

Love found it was getting crowded. She took Yulner by the hand and pulled him away. She deemed to go to another stone house and snatched with a pair of sheepskins for their little love nest.

Yulner and Love rushed around the aisles, wended to the right around a corner, then again right and there Love saw a door. Love held Yulner’s hand very tightly.

“Stop!” screamed Yulner when he saw which door Love was going to open.

“We’re in a hurry,” said Love and pushed the door inwards anyway.

The door hit Ingolf on the thigh as Love and Yulner slipped into the small room where Ingolf was pissing. Ingolf lost balance and fell forward. Yulner tried to avoid stepping on Ingolf and made a swan dive over him, only to end up in the gutter. Yulner forgot to let go of Love's hand as she was carried away and tumbled down onto poor Ingolf, who slid forwards on his chest, down to the chute's out-hole. Ingolf narrowly avoided being drawn into the hole. When the worst of the mishap had calmed, Love could only come to the understanding that all three of them were in the shit.

“Shit up to my ears,” said Ingolf and laughed loudly. They all began laughing, a long and life-giving laugh. They gently gathered the sheepskin furs, which luckily had not been soiled, and quickly ran down to the beach. The weather goddesses stood by them and gave them a very mild wind for the season when they threw themselves into the water. After a thorough wash, they went back to the heated stone houses to dry their clothes and tell everyone about the funny event.

When their clothes finally began to dry, Vif came in and said she has seen a sign that allowed them to walk the Fullway walk in the morning. The Goddess Sjöfn had given them leave with a fire and two shadows on top of Hoy hill. A giant woman and a much smaller deity had allowed the walk in the shadow from the fire. The shadow had been enlarged to a giant size.

Vif was pleased with the sign. Now the goddesses Sjöfn and Hǫrn had allowed them to walk a Fullway walk that was not carved in the stars, the Moon or the Sun. Love did not have the heart to say that it was Maren who had lured someone up onto the mountain. She smiled inwardly.

When they woke up in the morning, the fire had not gone out. They ate their morning meal together and then went to the narrow spit of land that splits Harray Sea Loch and Loch Stenness. The landscape lured but was at the same time rough due of the never-ending storms that rolled over the islands.

There was something holy about this stead. From far away, they could glimpse the Ring of Brodgar and the Standing Stones of Stenness.

They walked in time towards the big rocks. Some of the stones were so high that they were almost frightening, thought Love and glanced up at the top of the highest stones. When they got closer, Love found a ditch around the Ring of Brodgar that measured 32 feet wide and in some places Love reckoned a depth of eleven feet. The whole ring was made of of sixty stones, with a width of 340 feet.

On the Orkney Isles they had another yard, which measured two and a half feet and a couple more inches. Thus, the ring measured 125 Orkney Yards. The ring had two ingongs, one in the north-west and one in the south-east.

Vif said the moon was not going to attend because this day was not a chosen measurement day or day of scores, as Orkney people also called a day when you mark the Sun or the Moon's waxing in the rock or with poles. But they had been given leave by the Goddesses to be here and to walk the Fullway walk. Vif wanted so much for Love to take part in the sidr around the Ring of Brodgar and the Standing Stones of Stenness.

Vif had seen that six people had already made it to the Holy “We-place” and made ready the feast. Vif came with the Rosers in a tow with the Stromness people, who handed out the holy tokens that were always used at Fullway walks at Brodgar and Stenness. Vif said that Brodgar and Stenness used to measure the moon goddess's movements. If you could understand and use the Rings you could foretell

all the moon goddess's whims and wishes. Vif showed Love all the measurement tools in the land around them.

"Love, look here," said Vif, "thus the length to Kame is 5.12 miles, to the cliffs at Hellia on the island of Hoy, 8.33 miles, to the Mid Hill 3.74 miles, and the depression at Ravie Hill."

"You know so much," said Love and looked in awe at Vif.

Vif showed Love the Goddess stone that marked the fare of the Goddess through the air many years ago.

Love heard someone playing a stringed instrument but could not see who was playing and from where the sound was coming. Vif made a sign and the six folk from Stromness began walking around in the trench. They bore the sun cross and Moon-half. The waxing moon went first, a Holy sign to the Moon Goddess Disa. They took nine steps at a time and then rested. Then again nine steps and then rested. The wind abated. The air was warm, almost hot. Love felt the Fullway walk feeling rising inside. She was warm in her heart and hoped that everything would stay as it was just then. The sun shone dutifully, maybe almost a little embarrassed at all the tribute now given to the Moon Goddess Disa. Love munned the Disatingstungel feast in the Roden land. Then Disers linked birth to the Moon and how the Moon bears upon the woman's moon-time. But on the other hand, the Sun God Ull had so many sun-shrines measuring his time, that Brodgar and Stenness made things a little more well-matched, Love thought and looked happily around her.

After the feasts, Vif sat with Love and the other Rosers to eat a farewell meal. Vif wished them luck and gave them headways to get the best wind.

"Goodbye Love, and tell the Vigothi Olof that I still love him," said Vif with tears in her eyes.

"Dear Vif, I will tell him that when I come home," said Love and shed even more tears.

Noatun set out and they followed the coast southwards. Noatun had a following wind and with heavy strokes with the oars they fared away from the Orkney Isles. Love could hear the water lapping against the foreboard as she lay back and rested. Noatun creaked. Love loved that din. It gave her a warrant and a feeling of wholeness. Good weather allowed them to sail almost all the time. They had plenty of food from Vif, who had cast Seyds over the food. Noatun fared quickly. They followed the coast at length but did not go ashore until Lindisfarne, which was also called the Holy Island. Love beheld the fullsome Fullway walk aisles on the island, which led to a well-hewn Stallar on the southern part of the island. Love stood, as usual, in the bow with bare breasts to please the land-wights, who answered by giving the Rosers well-being. The Rosers found both berries and fruits, boarded Noatun again and rowed down the coast.

When they came to Lowestoft in Norfolk, a village awed to the goddess of Love, they stayed a few days before they got hold of fresh water. Then they set out again, this time out to sea. Rodulf had taken out the headways not to sail wrong. The Rosers went out across the North Sea and, once, they glimpsed the South Frisian islands. They went up to the North Frisian Island after passing Helgoland. A dozen pilot whales swam beside Noatun. They swam with the boat. The Rosers waved to them. The Holy sun warmed them. The whales kept swimming next to Noatun, which the Rosers took as a good sign. They followed Noatun for three days, showing that the sea's dwellers liked the Rosers and that nothing would

hit the Rosers during the trip. The Holy sun sank below the land-line that split the sea from the sky. Love found the view was one of the most good-looking she had ever seen.

The Rosers came to land of the Danes and sailed up the coast until they came to Skagen, the northernmost tip of the land of the Danes. They camped and fixed Noatun, which had taken some tough hits during the crossing. They did not meet anybody. The Rosers stayed on the beach and took it easy. They had travelled far and felt worn out. Love felt pain in her arm muscles from rowing. Her hands had grown tougher and she had become sunburnt from all the days of the holy Sun. Her blonde hair pricked up even more matched with Love's bronzed body. Love was at Skagen Beach and was enthralled by the light. The mild, soft, beautiful light that gave a very deep feeling. Love thought of the Disers. She knew that the Skagen Light was the Disers' meg. In the dim sunshine, the Disers' Hug was spread about. With the help of the Skagen Light, the Disers enlightened everything around Love and the Rosers with the everlasting power of an everlasting life. Love took off her tunic and lay naked on the beach in the Holy sunlight. She let the Skagen Light cover her whole body. Love knew that she was filled with new strength and wellbeing.

Love felt a little dizzy from the strong heat of the sun. She thought of the Sun God Ull and took in his life-giving rays. She smiled when she thought she might be teemed with Ull's Sun-seed, that she had got the Holy signs of the Hofgydja Loweswater, a gold chain highlighted by Ulls Sun-seed. The gold chain hung around her neck and Love felt how it swallowed all the heat from the Holy sunbeams. Love had now understood that she would be teemed and that the child would be one of the Sun's children. She fell asleep and woke up when Maren tickled her with a blade of grass. Maren smiled and said she wanted to make mischief. Karla stood behind her and nodded.

"Love, you've become so boring! Let's do something," Maren said looked hornily at Love.

"I see that you want to do something rowdy or raunchy," Love said as she sat up.

"That's right," Maren said. "Do you mun what we usually did when we worked in the fields and had become tired of swinging the pick? During Hay-month and Fall-month when a lonely man happens to walk in the cornfields or the barley fields where the women harvest the corn or the barley, he's fair game for all the women working in the fields. Hay-month is the time, remember that, Love," said Maren raunchily and Karla nodded

"Yes, the Yausa-bylaw, I mun," Love said and lay down again on the beach. "But now we are in the land of the Danes and they may not have the same bylaw here.

"Love, since when have you become so good?" said Maren angrily.

"Since when would you have turned down a Yausa?" Karla asked Love and looked straight at her.

"You used to be the worst, the harshest, and would beat the fucced man when he could no longer raise his limb," Karla said and sneered.

"You used to be the first woman to tear off the clothes from the man, the one who made sure he had to run home naked," said Maren scornfully to tease Love.

"Yes, yes, yes. Sure, but that was before. Now we are not in the Roden fields and we are far from Roden," said Love and turned to the other side.

Maren and Karla also took off their tunics and let the rays of the sun god Ull fill their bodies. They lay on the beach the whole morning.

Love woke up and heard a man's reethe speaking to them. First she did not understand if it was one of the Rosers but soon heard that there was a fisherman who came along the beach with his fishing pole and his basket with seafood. He had already seen the three women. Nearby.

He stood still for a long moment, watching Love, Maren and Karla.

“Is he not fair game?” Karla asked and looked at Maren.

“He cannot be more fair,” said Maren and rushed to her feet.

Karla followed. The man, who was barely over five feet tall, with long brown-beige hair and in his thirties, could only take a couple of running steps before Maren caught up with him and caught him with a kick across the shins. Karla pounced on him and tore off his clothes. Maren held his arms and neck. Love came quickly to her feet.

The Yausa-Yausa-sidr rang in her ears. She rushed to Karla and Maren, who held the scared man. Maren threw him on the beach and sat on his hands. So he would not be too cocky, Maren hit him on the head with a wooden stick with small branches. Love threw herself forward and grabbed his Völse. Karla held his legs. The man wrestled, kicked and screamed. Maren and Karla were forced to swap. Maren bulged out her firm breasts and Karla stroked his forehead with her Mornir. Love stroked the man's limb to a pleasurable strength and once the hard-on was there she sat astride him. She brought Völse into her and eked the beat. She pounded her Mornir all the way to his limb-root. He whimpered and cried on each beat, only to get a new blow from Maren.

Each slap softened his hard-on and they had to jack up his limb again. When Love was happy after a long while of fuccking, Maren sat astride the man. Love took care of his arms and made sure he stayed in their power. He fought less and less and Love could see how his eyes began to spin from the rough but clearly alluring treatment. Maren saw that the man's limb began to twitch and she stood up quickly and grabbed the dick to help the white seed spread across his maw and around Maren's hand. Maren kept on fondling his dick. He did not want to fucc anymore so she gave him a slap.

Love had kneaded her inner Mornir for a while and squirted the man in his open mouth.

“My squirt tastes like honey,” said Love and she shivered and quenched while she emptied a pint of her honey-water into his mouth.

“We know,” said Maren and Karla with one reethe.

Karla took over the work and soon the Völse stood up again. Karla now climbed the man, who no longer knew where he was. Karla moved her hips up and down. The man moaned more and more. Karla slapped her buttocks against the man's thighs so that her woman sap splashed everywhere. The Man puffed more and higher. Karla crouched and rubbed her Mornir against the man's limb. Maren squirted all over his body, a half-pint of squirt. The man's dick shivered. Love saw and snatched the Völse. His seed spurted out and got stuck in Karla's cunt hair, like a string of pearls. Karla rubbed the seed in her cunt hair and then dried it off on the man's chest.

“Good that he has a big towel there,” said Karla as she wiped off the last of his seed. Meanwhile, Love ripped his clothes. Love had a lot of pent-up anger that had not found an outlet. It came out now. When she came back, she found that the man's limb hung limp. She took his dick and began to work it with her mouth. He began turning around to flee away. He shouted things they did not understand. They told him to hold out until they were done. He shook his head. After a while, his Völse got up again, a nice hard-on limb and Love sank down on him, this time with her back turned to him. The fisherman



sprayed a third time and now Maren wanted to use him. The fucked fishermen could no longer hold the hard-on, despite Maren jerking him with all her power and cunningness and Karla sucking. Love shoved her Mornir in his face and yelled at him to lick. He did not lick. Love was overcome with rage and gave him a couple of punches in the face. Maren and Karla tried some more to revive his dick but it hung lifeless. Love dunked her bottom in the man's face, only to get a bite on one of her cunt-lips. She stood up.

Love came to her feet and shouted at Maren to turn on him. Maren did as Love ordered. Karla saw that the man's bottom was in the air. Love spat in the man's hairy hole and then drove in the wood with which he already been spanked. The man howled straight out. He jumped, twisted and turned so that he once again ended up on his back. One of the splinters of the wooden stick got stuck inside his bottom. He brought his hands to his behind but Maren was faster. She locked his hands again and Love stood straddled over the caught fishermen and let her piss sprinkle over his face. He spat and snorted. And so did Karla too Karla and Maren laughed. Love told Maren and Karla to release him. While the man had gathered his basket of seafood and his fishing rod, the girls sang together: "Yausa, Yausa, Yausa-Yausaman!"

He swung with his basket and his fishing rod as he tried to pull out wooden stick from his bottom. Love laughed as she had never done before in her life.

They stayed for some time, as the day already been late, and then returned to the place where Noatun was anchored. Roar told Love that they had seen a frightened man come running naked, wearing only a basket and a fishing rod and screaming something about women and gang rape and that we should flee for our lives.

"We understood at once that you had been raunchy so we said nothing. But now it's best that we set out to sea before they get a whole bunch here."

"Or maybe he'll think that it's so embarrassing that he won't tell," wondered Rodulf and loosened Noatun's bow-rope.

The wind came from behind, from Skagen, and they set off towards the coast on the other side. Rodulf had travelled here many times before and knew the waters.

Love found that the Goddesses had shown their best side. They had even seen a Yausa and that does not happen every day. She lay at the tip of the bow and saw how Noatun mouthed water. Love loved the gurgling sound at the bow. They glimpsed Læsø on the starboard side and Rodulf said they were right. They were doing well due the Dolphins that followed them on their way. Nothing could befall them.

As soon as they caught sight of the mainland, Rodulf set their course to the north. They fared to Tanum, one of the Vanirs' holiest places.

## Chapter 24 - GEIRWALD COMES TO TANUM

The band of Aesirs marched towards Tanum. Chief Walter had heard about all the gold in this village. They had all heard story after story about the Vanirs' golden riches, which knew no bounds; golden horses, golden horns, pure gold necklaces, wagons, Sun-discs, golden figures of the Sun God Ull and the Earth Goddess Njörd.

Their gold-thirst grew with every step. What Chief Walter did not know was that their six quick boats had been hit by a storm and forced to seek lee on the island of Zealand. The same storm also hit the band travelling over land but they were able to keep going northward.

They stole a number of horses and continued to rape and plunder on horseback. The mood was high. Chief Walter knew now that he had Mercurius with him and that everything would be fine, though he still had the feeling he was being followed. They marched northward and rode past the Lagnarohill, built on top of a stone ship. Geirwald could not understand why the Vanirs had suddenly decided to build a barrow on top of the twenty-four foot long ship.

They continued north to Eldsberga, where Kellner almost scared the life out of a farrow shepherd, who told them that a giant cult-axe was in the village's passage grave and that it measured six by seventeen feet. Kellner was so greedy that he rushed up to the passage grave to try and shift the heavy boulders. Chief Walter had told Kellner that it would take many months, horses and men to move the giant slabs that blocked the ingong. Kellner shouted because he could see the great cult axe but could not get to it. He screamed and swore and shook his mouth boils.

"Stupid, stupid, stupid Vanirs! Why have they blocked the ingong to the bronze cult-axe?" screamed Kellner and shouldered the big boulder in front of the grave.

"You'd have done the same if you knew that you would come," sneered Kriegerdorfer, giggling.

"Shut up before I make ground meat of you," answered Kellner and shook his oozing boils all the more.

They continued to ride past Hagbard's Gallows in Asige, which was built of four standing stones in two groups. Geirwald also saw rings carved in one group of stones and crooked signs on the other group. Kellner howled because there was no loot to rob. He suggested that they go to the nearest village and rape all the women just to get over the loss of seeing the axe that he could not take with him. Chief Walter told him that they had no time for hobbies if they were going to get anywhere.

Their next stop was at Högaberg, the high barrows not far from Vaursberg. Chief Walter thought he would find a village next to Högaberg and so there was, but the folk fled when they saw the onslaught nearing. Chief Walter behested to steal only smaller things. Kellner found a nice gold ring in a house and Geirwald came away with some molten bronze. They rode past Högaberg's graveyard and set off northwards. They came to Ölmevalla at Näsbokrok, where Geirwald saw eight cairns on a rock edge hewn by the inland ice. The largest of the mounds was nearly sixty feet wide and ten feet high. Holy golden tools lay on the Stallars. Kellner roared with joy when he picked up the gold rings, jewellery, necklaces and round shields of hammered bronze. The other Aesirs ran around and helped themselves to the worthy things that lay fully open to theft, no shelter at all. Geirwald wondered why the Vanirs did not shield their wealth better but it was likely that this would not have been needed until now, when Mercurius' followers had come to plunder and loot.

The group moved forward and northward. Geirwald saw that the islands looked different. He saw an archipelago for the first time in his life. Island after island went by. He had never before seen so many islands at once: creeks and streams, cuts and islets everywhere.

They came to Kuballe mound, the highest point on the island Tjörn. The cairn measured sixty-two feet in width and was surrounded by a wall about nine feet high.

Kellner and Hradbart rooted up a bronze sword, a bronze buckle, a button and a razor. The two began to quarrel over who had found the wealth. The quarrel was settled by Chief Walter, who looked straight at Kellner and asked if he could carry any more loot. Chief Walter replied himself.

“Kellner, you’ll have enough loot later, more than the horse can carry.”

Kellner gave in with a grunt and snorted with his boils, so much that the yellow-green matter ran along the corners of his stinking mouth. To further show his dislike, he pulled up his tunic in front of Hradbart and let rip, which caused a minor gale with hail in the form of the little balls of shit sitting in his arse-hair spreading all around. Hradbart answered by throwing ground black snails at Kellner’s neck. The blue-black mud ran down Kellner’s neck and back. Kellner roared and threw himself in the moss to wipe off the snail mush.

Nothing more happened and the Aesirs camped for the night. Geirwald was the lookout and fell asleep. He was woken by Kaisper, who punched him in the mouth, bursting his upper lip.

The goal of the rape and plunder raid was the holy fields of Tanum. They could hardly find a better haul than in Tanum, thought Chief Walter, who now knew that they would soon meet fighters who would fight back. They rode to Vrångstad, where Geirwald beheld a large barrow on a steep mountain, built from five large rocks covered with one huge rock and surrounded by a tall mound. Around the barrow lay a ring of large stones.

The Aesirs heard the bronze-lures from far away. Geirwald stopped when he heard the strange din. The band of Aesirs took cover on the ground but Chief Walter soon rose again and led them forward. The sound from the bronze-lures came from the village of Kalleby. At the village of Fossum, the Aesirs crept softly into the woods and Geirwald saw a beautiful Vigydja dance on some bare rock, wearing a rope skirt. Geirwald saw stone carvings wherever he went. He was met by a jumble of carvings of patterns, ships, animals and people.

Geirwald pondered the Vanir world of thinking. He wondered what they were thinking and why. Why all the ships? Why were there so many crew bars n the decks of the ships? And why all the feet and Sun wheels? Geirwald had heard that the Vanirs marked time using these ships but he had never understood why. Time just flew by in any case. It might be useful to know when to reap and when to sow but why keep track of so many years for such a long time? A couple of years would be enough, thought Geirwald when he looked at the rock carvings.

The Aesirs pushed on towards Tanum. They slowly made their way through the woods and could see a wedding Fullway walk towing slowly down the mountain along a Fullway causeway. About ninety Vanirs had gathered to awe the wedding.

The bride and groom stood on the Stallar Wig-bed and the Vigothi raised a gigantic, well-carved Wig-axe and spoke the Holy words that bound the Twain and their clans together. The carvers had already made deft carvings of the bride and the groom and the Vigothi with the huge Wig-axe on the bare rock.

Geirwald liked this place, the stead of Whitlycke. There was a calmness and stillness that he liked. But it was the calm before the storm.

Geirwald could see that it was high-ranked Vanirs being wed here in Whitlycke because the wedding guests wore a lot of gold and bronze in their clothing.

Rings, necklaces, jewellery, Gold studded Sun-wheel signs, highly blistering bronze-lures, golden horse bells and bronze plates jingled and chinked when the horses pulled the deftly carved wagon.

The Aesirs waited. Chief Walter still had not given the order to attack. Kellner squealed in forbearance. He found it so hard to see the titbits wander around down there by the river in front of the carved rock. Suddenly a wagon came at high speed and the naked bride and groom climbed aboard and went away with the wagoner.

The next couple of wagons arrived and the wedding guests climbed aboard. Chief Walter understood that they must attack now. They rushed down the hill.

Kellner howled so much that every wedding guest got shivers down their spine. Geirwald could hear the bronze-lures' din from far away. The Aesirs came down just in time to chop down the wheels of the wagon that would carry away the last of the guests. Hradbart and Kriegerdorfer rushed first with lifted spears and threw them through the bodies of the Vanirs trying to jump off the wagon. Kellner took his sword and struck the beam that fastened to the prancing horse to the wagon so that the goodies would not flee. All nine Vanirs were slaughtered and robbed of their gold rings and bronze things. Hradbart came back with arms full of gold rings and gold bowls that had been on the Stallar. He shone like the sun. Kellner also tore off the Vanirs' neatly sewn and now bloodied clothes, which had seemed rather pretty. Geirwald could hear from afar that the bronze-lures had changed tone and pitch. Now there was another din, far more threatening. Kriegerdorfer calmed the horse and brought it in the other headway. The Aesirs had got plenty of loot.

"Now we have to go back before they find us," screamed Chief Walter to his men. "Fill your bags and fasten the loot to the horses in the leather bags."

"Kellner, don't be so greedy. You're sagging under the weight," bawled Hradbart

Kellner liked best to keep track of everything he had stolen. So he kept on sagging under the weight.

The band of Aesirs turned and retreated towards Tegneby. They rode with drawn spears and had the wagon with all the booty in tow. Suddenly, the Angles came riding at full tilt towards them. The Angles were guests at the wedding and some of the dead were their kinsmen. They clashed on the outcrop at Tegneby. The Angles had had time to catch the Aesirs and were ready to fight. Now they attacked with raised bows. Kriegerdorfer, Hradbart and Kaisper set off straight for the Angles with twenty Aesirs in tow. The battle surged to and fro. The Angles were skilled horsemen and surrounded the Aesirs, killing them one by one.

Arrow after arrow sent the Aesirs one by one to the kingdom of the Whal, the kingdom of the dead. Kellner had fallen behind when the fight started. Geirwald was overcome with fear when he saw the onslaught of his kinsmen. He hid in a ditch and cried. Fear had taken over. He swooned.

When he woke up, everything was quiet. He saw how the Angles had ridden away to find the wedding. Many Aesirs laid dead on the outcrop at Tegneby, among them Kriegerdorfer, Hradbart and Kaisper. Chief Walter was not among the dead. Nor was Kellner. Then he heard a crash. It was Kellner coming out of the bushes. Geirwald had never been so happy to see that pockmarked ansyn. Kellner stared

around him. He was scared. He carried his loot and signed to Geirwald to follow him. They ran into the woods as fast as they could.

It was not long until they heard the clatter of horses' hoofs. The Angles and the Fossum and Kalleby folks had come back to search for the rest of the Aesirs. Geirwald and Kellner ran for their lives. Kellner lugged the large backpack so that the sweat ran along with the yellow-green-grey matter from his boils, down over his neck. They ran northward. They ran for two days and hid at night without making fire. Kellner told Geirwald that Chief Walter and dozens of the Aesirs had fled head over heels with many gold things. The other Aesirs had met their death at Tegneby. Chief Walter and the other Aesirs had fled to the south.

Now they stood there, Kellner and Geirwald, in the middle of the oak woods. They had lost headway. They argued about which way they should go. They wanted to go southward to hopefully find Chief Walter and the remaining Aesirs. Within, Geirwald doubted that they would find Chief Walter. They went south, or at least they thought they did. In fact, they went north to Lake Vänern.

## Chapter 25 - LOVE VISITS WHITLYCKE IN TANUM

Noatun neared the Bohuslän coast. The Rosers had followed the coast northward. Rodulf knew the coast inside out. He knew every reef and every skerry. He had travelled to Tanum many times and had many friends in the villages there.

Love felt that something had happened. Something was in the air. She had also seen signs that gave rise to these thoughts. Three eagles had flown quietly along the coast and followed Noatun, but then suddenly they had flown off, inland; not their usual dive for food but in a strange, crooked line. Rodulf shook his head as he had watched the eagles' behaviour. Love hurried to make a round sign with her hand. She made a ring in the air to shield her and the crew against evil thoughts.

They rowed past Kuballe cairn, Haga, Brattås and Backa and rounded the island Valön. On Valön's north side they could see three large mounds. Then it was not long before they caught sight of Tanum.

They went ashore. Love lay down on the ground and let her maw and chest touch the Bohuslän earth. Love felt like a part of the earth and could hardly stand back up. After they had awed the Earth Goddess Njård, they walked quickly towards Whitlycke. From far away, Love saw that there was a gathering. Many people had gathered on the mountain on the other side of the outcrop at Whitlycke. They were welcomed by many angry Whitlycke folk, who jostled to be first to tell them about the awful event that had just happened. An elderly, wrinkled and white-haired man in a grey-green tunic with patterns of rings and a sun cross calmed the Whitlycke folk and called for stillness. Many wept and others showed rage. The older man said his name was Sven and that he belonged to an old Whitlycke family. He was an awed Lunda-Gothi and said he was familiar with both her father, Alf, and her mother, the Hofgydjan Leufsta. While they spoke, the Tanum folk took their dead to a barrow on the hill some way from the carved rock outcrops.

Sven invited Love to participate in the wedding party, which had been put off because of what had happened. The Angles and the Saxons came riding up, halted and got off their horses. They came forward and greeted the Rosers and Love told them that they had just come from the Orkney Islands and Newgrange. The Angles said they had many kinsmen on the other side of the water and were gladdened by the news, despite the horror that had just unfolded. The Angles told how they had paddled at breakneck speed to catch up to Chief Walter's men. It would have been easy to follow their tracks; all their raids on the villages made it easy to track where they had been.

The Angles were led by a small, sturdy man in a well-cut serk, with countless Njård tokens woven into the gown. Behind him stood a tall, sturdy woman with dark blond hair. She had only one breast, the left one. Love was told that she had cut off her other breast to better steer the bow. She was almost a match for Maren, but not quite. She looked at Maren and Maren looked at the Anglian woman. They did not like each other, Love saw at once.

The Rosers and the Angles were offered shelter to take part in the Whitlycke people's Högning, their burial. Within only a half moon, the Högnings were ready. The dead Vanirs had been put on awed stretchers carried by six men and two women.

The full burial tow was made up of nearly one hundred and fifty Vanirs and led by the Lundagothi Sven. Three pairs of bronze-lurs went in the forefront. Then came a number of grave-settras with grave offerings and after them came the mourners closest to the dead. Then came the Whitlycke folk and then the guests. Last went the drumming singers, who hummed the grave song.

Love saw that the Whitlycke folk did not burn their dead like many other southern folk. Instead, they marched to Greby's large burial ground with awe. Many Whitlycke folk had already been buried here. The whole field was covered with round mounds.

They carried the dead straight into the open chamber. The Lunda-gothi Sven spoke at length and munned about all things, birth and everlasting life. The deaths of these kinsmen meant that more children would be born to give new life and new strength to the Whitlycke folk. New life and new children would let the Sidr live forever and the carvings would be carved as they always had been.

After the dead had been put into the barrow, the burial tow walked eighteen laps around the mound, twice nine turns so that the fruitfulness power of the dead would be given to the living Whitlycke people, so they could have children and carry the bylaws forward in times to come.

The grave gifts were brought forward by grave-settras. They were mainly well-made combs and pearls. Through Karla, Love gave a cloth with the Roden sun signs. The Angles gave carved slate plates. All the grave gifts were put down around the dead in the barrow. When this was done, the singers began to sing the grave-song,

The grave-song touched Love, who felt the kinship between life and death, burial and birth. She thought about how everything was made from tiny bits and how those bits came into the earth and gave back some power to the earth and then each bit was reborn in some way. Love felt that the dead Whitlycke-people were not dead but were already on their way to being reborn. She had just begun to think these thoughts when the earth was being poured over the slaughtered Vanirs. After that, the tomb was sealed and soon Love could not see the grave any longer. Soon they will be back, said Love quietly to herself. The song echoed over the Greby field as the work was being done.

It was not long until the barrow was again filled with earth and a nice roundness could be seen. The bronze-lurs rang and called that a retreat would take place. They returned to Whitlycke and all the grave guests were invited to the big burial feast, the grave-ale of the Lunda-gothi Sven.

"On behalf of my dead kinsmen, we welcome you all to this grave-ale. I know they wanted their Munin and their rebirth to be fulfilled and hailed with gladness and not with grief. Therefore, I lift the first Skol to the rebirth of our dead. Kinsmen, Skol! Let the bowl go around among the guests so that all may taste."

The bowl wandered from guest to guest, as went the old Vanir Sidr of the and when the bowl came to Ingolf, Karla said, "Ingolf, don't drink too much. The bowl has to go round all the guests. Everybody has to have a sip, so there must be enough for everyone."

Ingolf just smiled and swilled so that it ran down his cheeks. The Whitlycke folk and Sven laughed and let the next bowl of ale wander around among the guests.

Karla told Love that she was worried that Ingolf would spew into a bronze-lur. Karla pointed towards the corner where Ingolf stood. He was already quite drunk and was peering into the inside of a bronze-lur. The bronze-lur player did not seem so glad and Maren went over to fetch Ingolf. When she came carrying Ingolf, she got a sneer from the tall Anglian woman, who teased Maren and the Rosers.

"It's a weak man who can't take a little grave-ale."

Maren threw Ingolf aside and was about to give the woman a hard slap when Karla came up and made Maren change her mind. They took Ingolf by the arms and ankles and carried him out to rest in the moss on the rocks.

The next day, the Rosers said farewell to the Angles and the Whitlycke people. They went southward to sail across Lake Vänern, Lake Mälaren and Hjälmarén, for they felt homesick. They made their way down to Orust into Stigfjord. They rowed past the Granhogen, a large barrow that was nine feet high and ninety feet wide.

They sailed down the Brattefors river and then took to lake Hällungen. From Hällungen, they sailed on small rivers to Huveröd, with its twenty big mounds and five stone rings. With great effort, they rowed upstream on the Göta River and came to Halleberg and to Hästevad. Halleberg was a giant borough with very steep cliffs of hard, black stone. The tallest cliffs were found at Storgård, where they were up to 450 feet high.

The Vanirs had awed and held feasts at Halleberg for many, many years. They carried on and came to the stone ring at Hästevad, which was fifty-four to sixty feet in width and with eight six-foot stones as well as a burial mound inside the stone ring. They had a following wind and sailed with good speed along Vänern's beaches. The Rosers rounded Vänernäs and made a foray to Flyhov to look at the many fine carvings: Sun wheels, time-ships, moons in the form of footprints and stars as pits ground into the rock. They stood for a long time and awed the finely carved stones.

They rowed onwards to the Bear Strait and came to Vänsjön. They carried rowing through the Ullersound, which was named in honour of the Sun God Ull, and came out at the bay of Kinnevik. They rowed straight across the bay and came to the hill Kinnekulle, where they were welcomed with open arms by the Sun-folk of Kinnekulle, who talked about Falköping's passage graves, twenty in number. Their gongs were all built in the same headway as those at the Midsummer Solstice in the middle of Denmark. Hence Love could work out that the passage graves had been built two thousand, three hundred and thirty years ago, when the great sun-shadow could be seen along the whole Vanir coast, from the Atlantic and up to Uppland.

Love saw the Kinnekulle views. They gave such a feeling of calm and wellbeing that they stayed near the top all day. At the top was a Stallar and around the Stallar were Hopts and Bonds.

The following day, they carried on from Vänern to Årösbay and into Lake Skagern and later that day they went ashore at Revsten, near Rudskoga. Awesomely, they went into the two stone rings, which had seven and eight blocks. The first stone ring was thirty feet in width and the second twenty-four. The stones forming the rings were two feet and eight inches high. The Holy stones just stood there and waited. The Rosers went into the ring after Love asked leave of the Goddesses to go in. Love had bared breasts and made a round sign with her right hand.

They fared with Noatun and came to Letälven, a link to Lake Möckeln. With help from the Ölsdale folk, the Rosers carried Noatun over Knutsbo and down through Ölsdale to the long Lake Ölen. They put the ship onto the lake and went first to the lake Toften, then took the Svartån river up to Lake Hjälmarén. Noatun had a tailwind and the Rosers were able to rest. Rodulf stood strong at the helm and Noatun moved at a good speed.

Rodulf made up his mind to use the wind as they carried on travelling both by day and by night. The other Rosers wanted to make a högning, with everyone lying in a pile, and they all lay in the högning for the rest of the night. When the morning dawned, they were already in Tiggeby and could view the Brim Cairn's stone formations, stone naves, stone-filled cairns and three piles of cooking stones. The last of the piles was being worked on by the Tiggeby folk, who had not gone with their animals but had made up their mind to spend the winter in the same place as they were using for a summer pasture.



They waved and welcomed the Rosers, a nice break from work. The Rosers got to taste a winsome fish soup and Ingolf ate so greedily he almost choked. Love made a short speech and told them about Newgrange and all the other events. The Tiggeby folk's eyes grew wide. The Rosers got good advice about how they should fare.

They came into Lake Mälaren, took to the right and came to the village Sundbyholm. They rowed to Björ's Bay and came to the bay of Sörfjärden. They stayed at Högberga and saw two oblong cairns and eleven piles of stones burnt brittle from cooking. An old woman who was watching over the still-smoldering stones helped them with their way forward. Before they left, the woman said:

“Love of the Hofgydja Leufsta's kin. I have some things to tell you. There will be a time when the inland people from the south will come and destroy all the steads where our people have awed the old Sidrs, our bylaws and doings, on the high mountains and hills and under the green trees. The inland people from the south will tear down our Stallars, smash our pillars and burn our Rods, cut down our holy carved trees and try to wipe our names from our holy “We”-places.

“The Inland people from the south will break our overview of the world and split our thinking it into bits in order to rule over us. Without a wholeness of holy thinking it will be much easier to steer us, even on the outermost edges of a great kingdom.

“The family will be replaced by power in the south. Soul and body will be split from each other. The thought of the *Hug* will wane. What we refer to as a Hug, the oneness of mind and body, that the *Hug* is like a hug, a happening that must be shared with others to be found at all, that thinking will fade away. The world will be split into two bits, one natural and one over-natural, the secular and the spiritual, an evil and a good. Written language will master the thoughts. The same happened to the Copts in Egypt and Armenia. Our way of thinking is fully different.

“We think that everything comes about thanks to powers, haps and events. Though they cannot be seen, these are so real that everything comes together and no distinction is made between our world and 'the other', both that which we can see and understand and that which lies beyond. Therefore, all things and beings in nature are not split from each other but are strongly linked with one another. All these bits are part of a whole as well as being wholes themselves. They become something that they in fact are not. Each whole can be in many places at the same time.

“All things are alive, uncatchable and dusky. Just as I sit here and watch the last fire burning the brittle burnt stones and know that the stones are alive. The stones are now in many places at the same time, in their burnt life. So it is with us. Everything is linked. Very small, un-seeable events can give rise to other events that you cannot foretell. The wind from a butterfly's wings near the Copts in Egypt may trigger a storm for us. Everything has an outcome and everything comes round again.

“And Love, have trust! Our other way of thinking will come again, when written language loses its power over thoughts. Every being is a mid-point, therefore there is no fixed midpoint, although the inland people from the south wishes to think that way. Every eye, every ear, every nose, every part of our skin is a midpoint. Thanks to the measurements made on many thousands of Midsummers, Midwinters, Spring Eves, Fall Eves and full overshadowings of the Sun, we know that gravity bends our understanding of time in space so we feel it as if we are travelling in circles. Therefore, every man or woman is a midpoint in the world.

“Our “holistic” way creates a fuzzy boundary between mankind and everything around us. For us, it is quite natural to be both ourselves and another creature, or something else. Therefore, we can very

easily adopt an animal port, ham, and take on the animal's Hug. We feel like the animal or other thing. We take on the ham of the wolf, the bear, a bird or any other animal.

“For our people, the Earth is not to be hurt. Each shiny oak leaf, every sandy beach, each fog, every meadow, every humming bee is holy. Everything is Holy. We can feel the sap flowing in the trees in the same way that we can feel blood flowing in our veins. We are part of the Earth Goddess Njård and she, the Earth, is part of us. The good-smelling flowers are our sisters. The elk, deer and eagle are our brothers. The high mountains, the cliffs, meadow's fruits, the heat from the elk's body and we all belong to the same kin. The glittering water that moves in the streams and the rivers is not just water, it is our the blood of our foremothers. Each ripple in the clear waters of the lakes can tell the story of our people. The rippling water is the reethe of my grandmother and grandfather. The rivers are our sisters. They quench our thirst, carry our ships and feed our children. We must therefore treat the river with the kindness with which we would treat a sister or a brother.

“Mun that the air is good to us. The air is breathed by all of life and it maintains and gives us our breath. The wind that gave our foremother her first breath and her the last sigh is the same wind that gives our children the hug of life.

“Mun to teach your children what we have taught you! The Earth is our mother. Whatever bears upon the Earth, also bears upon all the Earth's children. The Earth does not belong to mankind; mankind belongs to the Earth. Everything is linked, like the blood that bonds us all. Man does not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself, too. That, the Norns will make sure of. Everything is repeated. Everything goes round.”

The old woman said this while she poked with a stick in the cooling, brittled stone. She ended her long speech and smiled. No one said anything for a long while. Love thought about what the woman had said and made up quoths to mun her words.

The old woman from Högberga told the Rosers they must of go and see the wooden stead of the fruitfulness god, Frey, in Rällinge. She waned in front of their eyes and Love could not understand how she had just gone, leaving no tracks.

Filled with new strength, the Rosers once again boarded Noatun and headed off to Rällinge. It was not long before they had reached the shore of Rällinge, where they tied up Noatun. They heard the dins of a feast far away. Ingolf smiled with his whole ansyn. He just shone with gladness. Love also felt how it tickled all over her body. Karla tittered and Maren's eyes grew full of lust.

They quickly neared the village Rällinge. From afar, Love could smell newly boiled crayfish. She had not eaten crayfish for a whole year. Now it was the harvest month and there was no better time than the harvest month to eat crayfish.

The Rosers came into the village, whose outer edge was made up of longhouses. The longhouses' thatched roofs were braided neatly and skillfully. beheld Love with gladness.

Everyone was getting ready for the feast. A strong woman came to greet them. A Rällinge man asked who they were and where they were from and why they were in Rällinge, for now the Rälling folk were awed n Rällinge. Love told the Rällinge people about their trip to Newgrange, Knowth, Dowth and Orkney and about what they had seen. The woman who listened to her story had a furrowed, rough ansyn, sharp shoulders and dark blonde braided hair. She glanced at them as if she did not believe their story and said in turn that many of their kinsmen had died of an unknown sickness.

“Many died suddenly. Why, we don’t know. But now we will dance in awe of Frey and taste the lake’s delights, as is the age-old Sidr,” said the old woman and looked both sad and glad.

The old woman told Love that all their Gydjas had died of the sickness and that no learlings had had the time to learn any healing skills. Love warranted her that a Gothi or a Gydja would come to them to give them the cunningness they needed.

Meanwhile, Karla picked up an armring of gold, which she gave to Love, who gave the ring to the woman. At first she paused because she was not Gydja-awed. Love told her that she, Love, was Vigydja-awed, that she had just come from Newgrange and the armring only looped twice. Suddenly, the woman threw herself around the neck of Love in thankfulness. Then she began to cry out to the others who were working in the village.

The woman brought them to the middle of the village, where they beheld a ten foot high wooden statue of the fruitfulness god Frey. Love knew that Frey was a new god who was not ranked quite as highly as the fruitfulness god Ing. But she also knew that Frey enjoyed great worship in this land and so may it be.

Frey sat with crossed legs and held his chin with his right hand. His left hand lay in his lap. On his head he wore a pointed hat but otherwise he was naked. His Völse stood straight up. The oak wood had been rubbed to shine very much and glans of his Völse shone in the evening sun. Around Frey lay heaps of flowers and in his lap lay newly boiled crayfish. Love had never seen so many crayfish before. The mouth-watering smell spread everywhere.

“I’m so hungry! Those crayfish smell so good,” said Ingolf and looked eagerly at the crayfish.

“Calm down, there’s much more to see,” said Karla and peered the men.

“Look they’re getting ready for the swing,” said Maren and licked her lips when she saw the good-looking men.

“Love, you will now see the swing we use to awe the Fruitfulness god Frey: the hard-on dance. Nine men will dance with a hard-on and the one who is last to lose the hard-on is the winner,” said the old woman. She looked at Maren and smiled.

The old woman spoke with another woman and the dance began. Nine men with leg warmers and hard-ons danced around Frey. The drums eked the beat. Maren let her lewd gaze wander over the dancing men. She sniffed quarry. Love wondered how they could hold a hard-on while they danced. The drums swirled. All in the village had something to hit to make a sound and so did the Rosers. Roar, Visten and Karla found a hollow log to beat on. Each time the Völse of a dancer softened, that dancer must leave the dancing ring.

One by one, they had to leave the ring. Those dancers that had been made to leave the ring stood in a ring nearby and spun their Völse sun-wise. The dancers got a whiner, a string of rope with a slender bit of wood that gives a whining sound. The whiner gave a buzzing sound when the dancer spun it. They had to spin the carved bit of wood on a string whilst spinning their Völse. Only the most steadfast could keep on. The beat eked and in the end there were only two men left. They went around the god Frey and spun their Völse. In the end, one of the men grew weary, fumbling with the footwork. All cheered. The hardest man now ran around the wooden stead of Frey and jumped on a big leather pouch. The leather pouch held a white drink.

Everyone screamed. The Leather pouch sent the milky white liquid up through the middle of Frey and it burst out through the hat. Frey's seed spread over the crayfish.

This was the sign that everyone could grab the crayfish. Almost mindlessly, the Rällinge people rushed to Frey's knees to help themselves to the titbits. Ingolf darted in like an arrow. Love did not do anything. Maren lumbered forward a little shyly. Karla tried to squeeze her way through all the folk. Rodulf, Roar and Visten took it easy. Only Ingolf and Karla got hold of crayfish and they shared them with the others. A winsome feast. The drums had fallen still for the drummers were busy eating as many crayfish as they could.

The feast carried on all night and the Rällinge people liked to feast. Rodulf had a tough job getting the crew up the next day. They wanted to go home, so they sat down again behind the oars after they had taken leave of the Rällinge people.

They rowed against the wind, which tore at their clothes. It was hard to row but they made up their minds to row anyway. Karla and Ingolf wanted to visit Vansö but they got no answer from the others. They fared past the islands Arnö and Grönsö and up into Birch Bay. They stopped at Munsö to drop off Roar, who returned home.

They came to Kalmarstrand to the draw at Kalmarsand, which meant that Noatun had to be pulled over a small strip of land that had come to light, due a stream that had changed flow. Love said she wanted to be alone and that she would go up to the holy stead Rösaring to be with the goddesses for a while. Rodulf found out that Noatun had sprung a leak when the boat was as drawn and they had to stay at Rösaring to mend it.

## Chapter 26 - GEIRWALD AND LOVE MEET AGAIN

Geirwald and Kellner stood alone in the woods. They had fled for many days and had barely slept at night. Kellner lugged the big bag with all the gold and bronze things. They had no idea where they were. Geirwald had a feeling that they were not on the right track. Many times they had gone around and come back to where they had begun. They dared not ask anyone for fear of being found. They could only keep going. Geirwald wanted Kellner to dump leather bag; with the leather bag in his arms, it was clear what they had done and they would not meet a nice end. Kellner refused to dump it for all the butter in Hallstatt: if he did, the whole raid would have been in vain. With the sack, they would be rich when they came back to Hallstatt. Geirwald munned Kellner it was a question of if and not when.

They had heard dogs or wolves and thought that the Vanirs had crafted wizardry. Once again, they fled hastily, jumped into a boat that they stole and crossed a number of lakes before the boat sprang a leak on a scar they did not see. They ate berries, roots, mushrooms and Kellner was lucky to snare a rabbit, whose neck he broke with his teeth. The fried meat tasted wonderful but they feared that the fire would lure the Vanirs.

So they kept on for two moons. In the end, Geirwald said he could not stand it any longer. He needed to talk to someone else. He must find out where they were. He told Kellner to hide the booty and then stay hidden until he, Geirwald, came back. Kellner agreed, mistrusting Geirwald. He hid the gold and bronze holy things but did not let Geirwald know where he had hidden them.

Geirwald went for half a day and then came to a stead of many of villages. He went straight into the first village he came across, ready to be stabbed to death, but nothing happened. Four women and some older men sat at the ingong to the longhouses and waved to him. He walked up and tried to say something but they did not understand him.

Geirwald drew in the earth, drawing the surrounding bays. He pointed to himself and tried to look bewildered. They gave him food and drink because he looked starved, then took him into a longhouse and let him rest. When he woke up, many people were sitting around him, saying things he did not understand. Then they put forward more food and fresh mead to drink. After many words and many drawings in the earth, it became clear that he was in Boglösa. He tried to find out which way the sea was and they signed to the east. He bowed and went off to fetch Kellner.

They went eastwards, as the Boglösa-folk had shown. They crept through leafy woods. Sometimes it was very hard not to be seen, above all in the big oak woods where the leaves of the big, strong oaks smothered all the undergrowth and left no hiding place. They rounded Ekolnsound Bay and came to the 'draft in Kalmarstrand', where they saw a boat drawn up ashore. They also glimpsed people who seemed to be fixing the boat. In order not to be seen, they swam with two large logs over to Rösaringudden, a wonderful headland. Kellner who could not swim, almost drowned a couple of times but, luckily, Geirwald saved him. The big fault was that he had the heavy bag with loot.

They swam over to the Rösaring headland in any case. They crept along the beach. Suddenly, Geirwald caught a sight of a woman who sat rapt in her thoughts at the top of the Rösaring hill. He told Kellner to go on along the beach, that he would catch him up later. There was something rare about that woman. He thought he had seen her before. Carefully, Geirwald crept up between the pines. He went a little to the left, up the steep hill.

When he came up onto the crest, he was greeted by the awesome view. He looked out over the bay and saw how the islands lay like a beam of evening sun. Where the woman was sitting, the view was fully open. Geirwald saw a number of barrows lying on the flat top of the hill. The trees had been cleared away so it had become an open place. Undergrowth was sparse.

He knew the woman. He had not been wrong. It was her, Love, the greatest beauty he had ever seen. He came right up without her seeing a thing. She was fully rapt in her thoughts. Not until he was standing right next to her did Love spot him. Love cried out, mostly in shock. She quickly stood up and began running. Geirwald shouted something she did not understand and tried to stop her. She tore herself away and was able to take a few steps. He caught her and took her down again. They began to wrestle. Love drove up her knee between Geirwald's legs and he crumbled. He did, however, grab hold of her ankles and she fell flat. He came up and over Love. She swung a punch and hit Geirwald in the eye, which became swollen. He began to tear Love's cloth. She kicked her legs and screamed. Geirwald held tightly onto Love's wrists and she could not do much with her hands. They were locked. Love twisted and writhed. She wriggled to and fro. She managed to get round Geirwald and they rolled around and down along the steep slopes. Now, everything happened quickly. They rolled faster and faster down the slope until they suddenly came to a stop. Love hit her back of the head in a pine tree.

When Love woke up, she found that Geirwald had torn off all her clothes and she was naked, on her stomach. Geirwald was fucking her, keeping a firm grip on her neck and throat. He had locked Love's legs with his. His heavy body lay on top. The back of her head ached. She felt foggy and dizzy. Geirwald fucked wildly and his dick pounded like a hammer. He was about to leave himself. He was about to get fully carried away. This was the last thing he had wanted. He just wanted to talk to her. He wanted her to like him. He wanted to look good, to do good, and then this happened. Why did he do it? His thoughts flew around. He became dimmer and dimmer. He was about to leave himself and adopt an animal's "ham". He had fully lost power over himself.

Love felt the man push his dick into her. In and out. She was pushed forward with each thrust. She felt the bark pieces on the ground. The bark bits scratched her breasts and underarms. Love tried to twist out of his grip but it was useless. She tried to push her knees under her body but it just pushed her buttocks further up and she got blisters on her knees. Love had a hard time gathering her thoughts. The back of her head ached.

Geirwald jabbed more and more wildly. With his weight, he thrust Love harder down into the ground. He thrust until he shouted as loudly as he could over the northern Björkfjärd lake. Love felt his cock twitch inside her.

Geirwald took another breath and screamed again. Now his scream was heard even as an echo from the other side of the Björkfjärd lake. Smyltness. Everything suddenly became fully still. Geirwald's harsh grip around Love's arms and neck loosened. With a jerk, Love came up on her knees and then pulled her arms forward and got hold of a tree root. With the root of the tree she jerked herself forward and came up onto her feet. Geirwald stayed on his knees with the seed dripping from his limb.

Love turned around, stayed for a while and looked at him. She thought for a while that he looked miserable but also sweet. The thought faded away as quickly as it came. He did not move. He just stared at her. Love was raging. She took two steps forward and kicked him right in the temple, so now he had two black eyes.

Geirwald raised his hand to his head and fell over. Love snatched her torn cloth and ran away. Geirwald called after her but could not bring himself to run after her. While she was running, she turned around and she saw that he was still on his knees with his head in his hands.

He screamed "Love!" as loudly as he could in his worthless state. She wended once again but did not slow down. Love ran back to Noatun and told the other Rosers what had happened. Rodulf, Ingolf and Roar set off to search for Geirwald but did not find him. They came back at dusk. Maren wondered why Love had begun to fight.

Love answered vaguely that she had not begun to fight. She did not really believe herself.

## Chapter 27 - LOVE COMES BACK TO RODEN

Noatun had now been repaired so that they could carry on their fare, and they set to the north and then come out on the Långhundra-route that took them to the Roden-land. The last bit felt very heavy. It had begun to get colder and the weather quickly became worse. They had the stream with them, and it always felt easier to go with the stream than to row against the stream. When they took the last strokes of the oars in the lake Nördingen and slipped into the village Love felt a huge happiness. She and her friends had come back from a very eventful trip to Newgrange, Knowth, Dowth, Stonehenge Woodhenge, the Frisian Islands and she had many stories to tell during the many long winter evenings.

The whole village and all the kins of the tribe came to meet them. Uncle Hauskuld beamed of happiness. Love's mother was dying and could not come to the beach to meet her daughter. Ullfrid and Turid and her father all stood there, nosy about their stories. Karla bare lofty all the gifts they had got in return for the gifts they brought with them and told widely about the trade agreement each gift had brought. Rodulf and Visten smiled when they saw their loved ones again. Ingolf had a couple of sips of strong mead from Roden and became even happier if this was possible.

He made a couple of somersaults on the ground and carried on with a couple in the air. After the last air trip he missed the landing and went straight into a longhouse whose flimsy mud walls did not hold for the sudden jolt.

Ingolf tumbled straight into the honey storage. Love could not believe her eyes when Ingolf came out staggering with his hair and ansyn fully mashed with yummy honey. Karla and Maren and a couple of other girls took the chance and licked off Ingolf the honey. Sweet !!! Ingolf enjoyed while sitting next to the house being a honey- lollipop.

Honey! Your are my honey, Maren said to Ingolf and licked his ear.

The big feast began to awe the fare and lasted for nine days.

Love could also see her mother before she died. With a happy smile on her lips, she said she could now die in peace, in frith, because now she knew that Love could take over her job. She also added that she soon would come again in the next birth. Love's mother the Hofgydja Leufsta was barrowed, put in a mound or barrow near the village of Roden. Many came from far and wide to help Love in the barrowing, in the Högning. Many large and very wealthy grave goods were put into the Hofgydja Leufstas barrow.

In Love the life grew life. Love reckoned the days that had passed since the Newgrange teeming and understood that it was not Rian that had teemed her but it was the man who raped her at Rösaring. The same man whom she met at Frijsland. Love saw this as her fate that had sent her this child and if the fate wanted so, it would be so.

The weather was warm. The sun was shining. No wind at all.

The blue sky was covered by thin, thin clouds

Karla gave Love a kiss in the neck.

Love, come on let us go up to the hill and gather some hawthorn!



Sure !

Mun Love! How wonderful it is that we are part of the “Tir na nOg” and now we have seen the mystical Ireland and some of the holy steads.

Yes, we are now part of the “Tir na nOg”, the “Land of the Young.” There is another being who will be a kin of the “Tir na nOg”. This Love pointed to her maw !

Love, you are magic! You are so cool ! Awesome!, said Karla and kissed the maw of Love.

Aveta, the midwife goddess will shield me, said Love.

Yes she will, nodded Karla.

The two girls went upwards the hill to gather hawthorn and looked over the village.

Karla and Love sneaked upon some loving twains and mingled.

Love loved it. She felt all the bodies around her. Karla helped the loving twains to put the Völse right, Völse, twice, double-handed.

You are magic Karla, Love whispered in her ear. They mingled for a long time and laid to rest on a sloping hill with the breath-taking view of the village below. Love purred if gladness !

Full of awe, the girls began to gather hawthorn and filled the bag within a short while and strolled back to village to have some crayfish with their kinspeople.

Love was happy!

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By buying this statue you will support the cultural heritage and the English language.

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**MIDSUMMER PAINTING   Largest painting on   Oil on Canvas 88 m2**



## History of the Painting

by Knyaz Rikard member of the Russian Union of Artists since the year 5147 (1997)

1988

Conceptual preparational work First sketches with Architect Mr.Andreas Fries.

1989-1994

Travelling to England, the Onega sea in Russia and to Tanum near Gothenburg to picture the Stone carvings.

1994

First contacts with artist conceptual artists, painter, sculptor, Professor Lars Wilks.

1992

Contact with ass, Professor Göran Henriksson, Uppsala University.

1994

Visit to the Stockholm archipelago for pictures. Contact with sculptor Albert Charkin, director of the Academy of Fine Arts in Russian.

1995

The "small" painting, oil on canvas 128 x 272 cm.

1996

Exhibition "Love and Erotica" at the "Manezh" Exhibition Hall in St.Petersburg Historical and contemporary art from the Hermitage, the Russian Museum and the Kunst Kammera (Cabinet of curiosities) 150 000 visitors.

1996

Exhibition of the final version 88 sq.m.(at the "Manezh" Exhibition Hall) during the Stockholm Days in June.

1997

Transported to Stockholm to be put up in front of the National Swedish museum and donated to the museum on condition that Midsummer would replace the painting Midvinterblot by Mr. Carl Larsson Donation declined by MD Olle Granath (ref. the year 1913 Mr. Larsson was refused)

1998

The Midsummer returns to Russia and is exhibited at the Union of Artists Exhibition Hall at Bolshaja Morskaya 36, as the only painting, a "one-painting-exhibition".

1999

Exhibited at the Railway station Finlandskij Volkzal in St.Petersburg on the 88 sq.m. wall, originally planned for Lenin depicted with a plough sowing the seeds as he arrived to the Finlandskij Volkzal 1917.

2000

The painting "Midsummer" is used rock video an documentary by film directors Lennart Östlund and Peter Meyer.

2000

Protests concerning the erected male organ of the bridegroom. A black square, la Malevich was placed to cover the erected organ.

2001

List of protests concerning the black square headed by women of the railway station to remove it "This man is the only one having stamina today". The black square was removed March, covered by the filmmaker Mr. Peter Meyer.

2002

The Finlandskij station is closed for renovation due 300 years celebration of St.Petersburg.

2003

The painting "Midsummer" returns to Stockholm to be exhibited at the World Trade Centre, City Terminalen.

*Knyaz Rikard is the first Western artist to become a member of the Russian Union of Artists since the year 5067 (1917) He works in granite, bronze, body-paintings, monumental sculptures and paintings.*





Painter knyaz Rikard

Price : 1 Million Euro

Smaller version 272 x 168 cm 148.000 Euro

## **Giver**

### **OLD ENGLISH WORDBOOK MUSEUM**

A museum for the development of the world language. The language that practically the whole world uses today and will use in the future. This museum will write, depict, the history of the English language. The museum should be interactive. The viewer has to press buttons. Write on screens, paint, touch and through things,

The Museum will contain ;

Indo-european roots

Big map of the roots ways.

Proto-germanic roots

Big map of the different ways of the roots.

DNA-derived development

The way out of Africa and through the Caucasian mountains

Word roots

Both sex words and ordinary words.

Statistics.

The amount of words in the English language. Speed of increase. Number of English speakers in each country.

Hall of Wordbooks.

Merriam-Webster, Cassell's, Collins, Longman, Bosworth-Toller etc the big companies will have a paid place.

Interaction.

Viewers will have the possibility to write their words and stories to be put up on the net.

Possibility to write in their personal webpage or homepage to create a back-link to the site of the museum.

A booth to make "Short Youtube comments"



Financing:

If you are interested to take part or you may find a Giver that is will finance the

[Building of the Museum pls contact us here](#). Or call Rikard at +46762 333 222.

If you find a Giver that makes this come true, you'll get 15% in a finders fee of the paid in sum.

The Giver will take part in the design of the museum, if wanted.

**Place:**

Any suggestion could be of interest if the placement will give enough of viewers.

Could be along a highly trafficated high-way. If a local administration is interested

the parking possibilities and way in should be viewed. Should be on a mountain or hill to be viewed from far away.

I will invest all my statues and paintings and also advise the full process.

Yours

Knyaz Rikard